UBC Centre for Human Settlements

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

Solutions to Homelessness: Vancouver Case Studies

J. David Hulchanski
Margaret Eberle
Kris Olds
Dana Stewart

January 1991

A Report Prepared for the

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Dedication

This report is dedicated to Doug Konrad who died on February 3, 1990. Doug was a master's degree student in the UBC Department of Geography. He devoted his attention to studying how the processes of economic, cultural, and political change were affecting the residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside neighourhoods. As one of the experts on Vancouver's inner city residential areas, Doug provided the authors of this study considerable assistance and insights in the preparation of this report.

Acknowledgements

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The researchers gratefully acknowledge the assistance of those who generously gave their time for this study. In particular we would like to thank Jim Green of DERA, Jim Elliott of First United Church, and Robert White of St. James' Social Service Society. Doug Konrad provided us with a considerable amount of information on the Downtown Eastside and on DERA. Leslie Gilbert, a research assistant at the Centre for Human Settlements, provided a great deal of assistance to all stages of the project.

In addition, we would like to thank the participants at the August 1989 *Low Income Housing Seminar* which was held at the UBC Centre for Human Settlements for their constructive comments and advice.

Tellier Tower, East Hastings Street, Vancouver
Robin Ward '89

This illustration is by Vancouver artist Robin Ward. It captures the architectural elements of Tellier Tower, one of the DERA housing projects profiled in this report, and the adjacent residential hotels, restaurants and shops. Tellier Tower, once known as the Holden Building, was built in 1909. It served as Vancouver's City Hall from 1929 to 1936 and as an office building until recently. In 1989 Tellier Tower opened its doors and is now a 90 unit residence building for senior citizens. The building was renovated under the federal/provincial non-profit social housing program.

Contents

Part I - Introduction and Context

1. Introduction **1**
- 1.1 Study Purpose 1
- 1.2 Study Method 2
- 1.3 The Organization of this Report 3

2. The Homeless and Homelessness **6**
- 2.1 Who are the Homeless? 6
- 2.2 Explaining Homelessness 9
- 2.3 Housing Needs of the Homeless 12
- 2.4 The Policy Debate 14

3. The Study Area **15**
- 3.1 The Vancouver Context 15
- 3.2 The Downtown Eastside 20
- 3.3 History of Downtown Eastside 21
- 3.4 Demographic Profile of Downtown Eastside Residents 23
- 3.5 Housing Stock in the Downtown Eastside 26
- 3.6 Summary 29

Part II - Case Studies

4. The Organizations **31**
- 4.1 The Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA) 31
- 4.2 The First United Church Housing Society 35
- 4.3 The St. James Social Services Society 36
- 4.4 Summary 40

5.0 The Projects 41
- 5.1 Four Sisters Co-op 42
- 5.2 Tellier Tower 51
- 5.3 Bill Hennessey Place 57
- 5.4 Ledingham Place 65
- 5.5 Cecilia Place 71
- 5.6 Victory House 76

Part III - Findings and Recommendations

6. Findings 82
- 6.1 The Organizations 82
- 6.2 The Housing Projects 84
- 6.3 Financing 89
- 6.4 Management and Operation 90

7. Public Policy Recommendations 92

Appendix A Interview Guide 99
Appendix B List of Persons Interviewed 101

Bibliography 102

Part I

Introduction and Context

1. Introduction

Over the past decade the number of homeless people in Canada's larger cities has increased in numbers unprecedented since the economic recession of the 1930s. Moreover, homelessness is affecting a broader spectrum of society. Its composition is changing to include more women, children, young people and the working poor. While observers can debate the various definitions of homelessness and the many methods of estimating their numbers, they generally agree that homelessness is a serious and expensive social problem.

In the 1980s, homelessness grew both in magnitude and in visibility. Awareness of the problem has spread with the conspicuousness of homeless people in every Canadian city, especially in urban neighbourhoods. An extensive body of literature, including surveys of the demographic and social characteristics of the homeless, emerged in the 1980s. To draw attention and to secure political commitment to the issue, the United Nations designated 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH).

It is now widely acknowledged that temporary shelters are not and do not lead to a long-term housing solution for people who are homeless. While a warm, dry bed for the night is a necessary temporary service, permanent, appropriate forms of accommodation are required. A secure affordable home is the only long term solution to homelessness. In addition, a good quality physical housing unit is often insufficient in itself for many people who are homeless or potentially homeless. Appropriate supportive services must be a part of any housing solution if it is to be successful.

Many observers have asserted that homelessness is an outcome of an inadequate supply of affordable rental housing. Aside from measures dealing directly with the problems of a poorly functioning private rental market, one of the solutions to homelessness is to build permanent public or non-profit low income housing accommodation. Temporary shelters do not solve the problem. A 1989 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) study that compares programs dealing with the homeless population in the United States, Canada and Britain concludes that "permanent, affordable housing must be a basic building block of any proposed solution" (Daly, 1988, p. ii).

Unfortunately, little is known about the permanent forms of accommodation currently provided for the homeless and the potentially homeless in Canada. A 1988 study by the Centre for Human Settlements, *Homelessness and the Homeless: Responses and Innovations*, furnishes brief descriptive accounts of a number of local initiatives across Canada. Other publications (Ontario Ministry of Housing, 1988; U.S., HUD, 1988) also provide similar brief project descriptions outlining interesting initiatives. However, these descriptions lack in-depth analysis of the processes used in developing the housing and fail to examine the important role of organizations that develop and manage the accommodation.

1.1 Study Purpose

Local and community-based housing or service organizations typically develop and manage projects to house the homeless. We know very little about the planning and design process by which these local initiatives developed, their funding and management, their facilities and support services, and the obstacles which they encounter. The purpose of this research is to conduct case studies of six housing projects and the three community-based organizations that sponsored them. This unique focus on the sponsoring organizations is based on the assumption that management and operation are critical to the success of housing for homeless persons and that the capabilities of the sponsoring organization critically influence ongoing management and operation.

This study seeks to build upon and extend our knowledge about innovative ways of assisting the homeless by identifying important locally derived solutions that may be replaceable on a broader scale and to document those features that pose problems for the sponsor or the tenants. It presents profiles of six projects developed and managed by three community-based organizations in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The report is intended to serve two audiences: local organizations involved in providing housing for the homeless; and government policy makers responsible for this aspect of the housing problem. Information about the factors contributing to effective housing projects will support and encourage other local innovations. The lessons learned from efforts to assist the homeless must inform future housing policy and program development.

1.2 Study Method

The research employs a case study method to illustrate the nature and the range of community based solutions to homelessness in a central city location in Vancouver. The case study method is useful for understanding complex situations or events within their local context. The method allows others to learn from the particular case under study and draw conclusions about their own specific situation. Four major research tasks were undertaken: bibliographic research and review of literature; selection of organizations and projects; data collection; and assessment of lessons learned.

Bibliographic Research and Review of Literature. In order to establish the broader issues associated with homelessness, a review of relevant Canadian and international literature was carried out. This review focused on the various definitions and the causes of homelessness and on the housing needs of homeless persons.

Organization and Project Selection. The housing activities of three community organizations are the subject of this study: the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA); First United Church Housing Society; and St. James' Social Services Society. A decision was made to select two projects per organization representing a range of project types. This was accomplished by employing the following criteria:

- the projects must provide permanent or long term housing (1 year or longer);
- the projects should be representative of the continuum of accommodation from independent housing through supportive housing to care facilities;
- the projects should serve varied target groups including different household types, ages, and disabilities;
- the projects should employ varied funding programs and structures (non-profit and co-operative).

Using the above criteria, the following six projects were selected:

- for Downtown Eastside Residents Association, Four Sisters Co-operative and Tellier Tower;
- for First United Church Housing Society, Bill Hennessy Place and Ledingham Place; and
- for St. James' Social Services Society, Cecilia House and Victory House.

Data Collection. Interviews with representatives of the three community organizations and with other knowledgeable persons were conducted in order to collect information about the organizations and the projects in question. (See interview guide in Appendix A.) Within each organization, staff members responsible for developing housing, project coordinators or managers, and current and past Board members were interviewed. Others interviewed for the study included the project architects, city planning staff, CMHC and British Columbia Housing Management Commission (BCHMC) staff, and community workers. (A list of persons interviewed is in Appendix B.) Newspaper clippings, published reports, and other published material supplemented the information gathered through the interviews.

1.3 The Organization of this Report

This report has three parts:

Part I	Introduction and Context
Part II	Case Studies
Part III	Findings and Recommendations

Part I introduces the rationale for the study, the purpose, methodology and organization of the report. It reviews the pertinent definitions and policy issues, and it describes the various explanations for homelessness and the housing needs of the homeless.

Chapter Three of Part I puts the plight of Vancouver's homeless population into context. It outlines the conditions that specifically contribute to homelessness in Vancouver taking into account features of the private and assisted rental housing market, mental health policies and practices, and prevailing trends in unemployment, poverty, and income assistance. It describes the area of Vancouver known as the Downtown Eastside, where five of the six projects are located, including history, major demographic characteristics and the housing stock.

Part II provides the case study reports of the three organizations and the six housing projects. Chapter Four presents profiles of the organizations, the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association, the First United Church Housing Society, and the St. James Social Services Society. Chapter Five describes the six housing projects grouped according to housing type: independent accommodation; supportive accommodation; and care facility. The description applies to the facility itself, the residents, their support services, the planning and design process, the funding and management of the operation, and problems or issues.

Part III presents the lessons learned from the case studies. Chapter 6 outlines key aspects of the organizations and the projects that are important for the effective provision of housing for homeless persons. Chapter 7 contains policy recommendations.

2. The Homeless and Homelessness

2.1 Who are the Homeless?

Any attempt to understand and to address homelessness must start by defining the nature of the problem. A review of the literature on homelessness shows a significant lack of consensus about how the problem should be defined and about which courses of action are appropriate solutions Our society has not agreed on a definition of homelessness and views it from many different perspectives. Consequently, homelessness is both difficult to define and even more difficult to measure.

Definitions of homelessness vary in scope from narrow and exclusive to comprehensive and inclusive. The generally accepted definition of homelessness is simply the lack of permanent residence where one can sleep and receive mail. The definition proposed by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) represents an example of the narrow type. As long as people have "a roof over their heads" they are not considered to be homeless:

> *Homelessness refers to people in the streets who, in seeking shelter, have no alternative but to obtain it from a private or public agency. Homeless people are distinguished from those who have permanent shelter even though that shelter may be physically inadequate. They are also distinguished from those living in overcrowded conditions* (US, HUD, 1984, p.7).

Other broader definitions emphasize lack of shelter in addition to disaffiliation and social isolation (Thorns, 1984). Bassuk's interpretation is rooted in the complex personal process. He states that homelessness is "the final stage in a lifelong series of crises and missed opportunities, the culmination of a gradual disengagement from supportive relationships and institutions" (Bassuk, 1984, p.43).

Because solutions depend on the perception of the problem, the political debate over the definition of homelessness is unresolved. According to one view, homeless people suffer from individual shortcomings and problems, and they are without homes "by choice." This definition is based on the argument that Canadians do not lack housing, and an adequate supply of affordable housing is available for all. In reality, "as the more secure and affordable alternatives disappear, a range of 'inappropriate' shelter options are by default becoming permanent quarters for some" (Oberlander and Fallick, 1987, p.15). Narrow definitions that focus upon homeless peoples' ability to find shelter rather than the need to house them permanently, are inadequate because they diminish the magnitude of the problem. By dismissing the homeless as a deviant sector of the population who choose to live on the streets or to receive temporary shelter by virtue of charity, we limit the rationale for addressing the problem.

This study employs the broad definition of homelessness as proposed by the United Nations during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. The UN defines the homeless according to two categories: 1) absolute homelessness, referring to individuals living on the streets with no physical shelter; and 2) relative homelessness, referring to people living in homes that do not meet basic health and safety standards. According to the UN, the five basic housing requirements are: protection from the elements; access to safe water and sanitation; security of tenure and personal safety; proximity to employment opportunities, educational facilities and health services; and affordability. The Canadian contribution to IYSH used the following definition of homelessness:

> *the absence of a continuing or permanent home over which individuals and families have personal control and which provides the essential needs of shelter, privacy and security at an affordable cost, together with ready access to social, economic and cultural public services* (Oberlander and Fallick, 1987, p.11).

It is this definition emphasizing the need for permanent secure, affordable housing that is used in this study.

The lack of consensus over what constitutes homelessness in Canada has led to disagreement over ways of measuring the size and the composition of the homeless population. Consequently, no accurate or reliable estimate of the homeless population in Canada exists. Virtually all statistics about housing conditions rely on an address. However, by definition, homeless people are transient. They move in and out of homelessness depending on economic conditions, availability of support services and affordable housing, and climate. However, the 1991 Census will attempt to improve estimates of homelessness through the inclusion of persons "not staying in a place on census day."

In its publication *The Search for Shelter*, the American Institute of Architects addresses the problem of transience by defining homelessness by duration. It describes "the chronic, who are homeless for more than 30 continuous days -- although many, if not most, have been homeless for months or years; the episodic, who tend to alternate for varying periods of time between being domiciled and homeless, with homelessness usually lasting less than 30 days; and the situational, for whom homelessness is the temporary result of an acute life crisis" (Greer, 1986, p.14).

Counting the number of homeless individuals depends on which definition of homelessness is used. An estimate of the homeless population without absolute shelter produces a smaller count than one including those who experience relative homelessness. For example, a study conducted in 1986 by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) estimated that between 20,000 and 40,000 absolute homeless people lived on the streets in Canada (McLaughlin, 1987, p.5). These figures are low estimates because they exclude the at risk population (i.e., relative homelessness).

The National Inquiry on Homelessness revised the estimate to range between 100,000 (the number of beds provided in emergency shelters) and 250,000 (the number of people living in substandard, insecure or unaffordable housing). The CCSD study also points out that approximately 4.5 million people in Canada live below the Statistics Canada poverty line. This is a significant increase over 1979 when 3.7 million Canadians lived in poverty (McLaughlin, 1987, p.9). In the early 1980s, CMHC estimated that over 500,000 renter households could not afford uncrowded decent shelter and that roughly 200,000 homeowners had serious affordability problems (Hulchanski, 1987, p.10).

Clearly, the debate over defining homelessness reflects the inherent values of a society and involves much more than the identification of numbers. Still, observers agree that the phenomenon of homelessness is growing dramatically:

> *The actual size of the homeless population is not the important issue. Whether or not Canadians believe that there are 20,000 or 100,000 homeless people in Canada, we must accept the fact that there is a large number of people in our country who are homeless or who live on the edge of homelessness. Too large a number for such an affluent country as Canada* (Hobson, 1988 p.12).

2.2 Explaining Homelessness

Differing perceptions about why homelessness occurs are at the root of the debate. An overview of the literature suggests that the causes of homelessness are multiple and varied and that they change over time and place. Thorns (1989) contends that homelessness is neither a temporary condition nor a product of one causal factor. Rather, it is a combination of complex social, economic, political and physical events.

The homeless of the 1980s include single mothers who have been evicted because of discriminatory practices of landlords, low income families who cannot pay the rent, single people who have been displaced from hotels and rooming houses due to inner-city gentrification, deinstitutionalized mentally ill, runaways and disaffected youth, immigrants and natives who are seeking employment, and women who have fled situations of domestic violence and abuse.

The causes of homelessness are as diverse as the people who are homeless. A theme repeated in the literature is that no single causal factor can explain homelessness: it is the outcome of a complex social and economic dynamic. In addition to immediate causes rooted in personal crisis and family violence, three more long-term, precipitating trends account for the phenomenon of homelessness in Canada: the inadequate supply of decent, affordable rental housing; the impact of mental health policies; and the growing levels of unemployment, poverty and cutbacks in income assistance programs.

Inadequate Supply of Affordable Rental Housing existed. Housing market failure in the rental sector is a crucial factor contributing to homelessness. In asking why poverty in the 1980s has taken the form of homelessness, Swanstrom (1989) argues that an inadequate supply of housing, particularly at the bottom of the rental market, is the primary cause. Furthermore, responsibility also lies with local governments, owing to restrictive zoning that prohibits construction of multi-family housing and often encourages gentrification.

The dwindling supply of affordable housing, especially for those with the lowest incomes, is frequently the direct precipitating cause of homelessness. Even those households with modest means increasingly encounter substandard housing. Eviction or the threat of eviction from inadequate units and rent increases which outstrip their ability to pay, force many at the low end of the rent market into homelessness. They seek temporary relief with friends, family or shelters and their temporary condition becomes more permanent when they find when no affordable alternatives:

> *Homelessness is a consequence of the continual loss of lower priced and low rent housing. This loss, in turn, is largely caused by the rise in land and housing prices. Lower income and impoverished households find fewer and fewer housing options in major metropolitan areas as gentrification, condominium conversion, and demolition of rental stock take place in the traditional neighbourhoods of the poor. Unless the pace and the nature of this change in the urban housing stock is better regulated or the supply of new low rent housing is increased significantly, the only possible outcome is more people without shelter and more people forced to find shelter in the worst imaginable places.* (Hulchanski, 1989, p.5).

Mental Health Policies. Mental health policies represent another key contributor to homelessness in the 1980s. Deinstitutionalization of ex-psychiatric patients without adequate planning for patients' needs has augmented homelessness in this country. According to Halsey (1986, p.31), hospitals across Canada have eliminated 80 percent of psychiatric beds over the past twenty-five years. Furthermore, approximately 30 to 40 percent of Canada's homeless population are deinstitutionalized mental patients. The intent of deinstitutionalization is to release medicated, stabilized patients from hospitals into the community to live independent lives. As a result, rising numbers of handicapped and physically or mentally disabled people are competing with low income earners for a diminishing number of affordable housing units.

Complementary after-care community support mechanisms are insufficient. Many discharged patients neglect to take their medication; they become disoriented and eventually homeless. Many are trapped in a cycle of hospital discharge, remittance and discharge. Increased funding for adequate community-based support services is a crucial requirement of deinstitutionalization. (McLaughlin, 1987, p.11).

Increased numbers of mentally ill people are on the street for other reasons. For example, changes to Ontario's *Mental Health Act* meant that the rights of the mentally ill individual are protected to such an extent that a family finds it difficult to obtain treatment for a person who does not see the need for it. Untreated, the person may become chronically ill, disassociated from family and friends, and ultimately homeless.

Unemployment, Poverty and Income Assistance Trends. Poverty is a pre-condition of homelessness. The two are inextricably linked. The 1970s, a decade of economic stagnation, high unemployment, inflation and declining real wages, laid the foundation for the economic recession of the early 1980s. Since 1984, poverty in Canada has eased somewhat. However, even with economic recovery, the number and the percentage of people living in poverty is higher at the close of the decade than they were in 1980, and the increase indicates the structural nature of the problem (Fallick, 1988, p.120).

Little change in income distribution has occurred in the past thirty years. The bottom quintile of Canada's population has earned only 3.6 percent of the total national income, and the upper quintile has accounted for 43.3 percent. Between 1982 and 1987, real incomes per paid worker in Canada declined by 2.2 percent; the average loss per worker was $53.00 per week. Purchasing power has subsequently dropped by 11 percent over the past decade (Carr, 1987, p.52). This situation indicates a departure from trends between 1965 and 1976 when real incomes climbed by an average of 4.2 percent per year (Hulchanski, 1988, p.42).

Income assistance trends have contributed to homelessness as well. The two pillars of the Canadian welfare system, unemployment insurance and social assistance, experienced dramatic increases in caseloads throughout the 1980s. Social assistance payments do not meet the Statistics Canada poverty line in a single jurisdiction in the country (Hulchanski, 1987, p.19). Guest (1985, p.239) admits that the welfare state is becoming obsolete and that social and economic changes are overtaking a social security system developed earlier in the twentieth century. According to Riches (1986, p.70), the concept of a safety net is an abstract notion for homeless and hungry people in Canada.

Heightened poverty due to unemployment, underemployment and inadequate income assistance is a critical factor in explaining why a rising number of Canadians have insufficient incomes to generate effective housing market demand. Nevertheless, interpretations of homelessness that focus solely on poverty and low incomes do not explain the geographic location or the timing of the new homeless. The poverty rate was higher in previous decades, the 1950s for example. Yet homelessness did not reach today's levels. While unemployment peaked in 1984 and then declined, the homeless population has continued to expand. The Atlantic provinces, with higher rates of poverty and unemployment do not experience severe homelessness. Instead, homelessness is concentrated in metropolitan areas like Vancouver with dynamic white collar economies. The important question regarding the relationship between poverty and homelessness then asks why poverty has taken the form of homelessness in the 1980s.

2.3 The Housing Needs of the Homeless

What are the housing needs of homeless persons? First and foremost, homeless people need a home, a permanent address. As well, they require stability and support.

Adequate, affordable, secure shelter is the first requirement for many homeless people, and it is typically the first response of social service and housing agencies to the problem of homelessness. Yet, "lack of reliable shelter is often only one of the forms of severe deprivation experienced by this group" (Redburn and Buss, 1986, p.98). A stable living environment is also essential to physical, mental and emotional well-being and to recovery. Hence, the permanent use of temporary shelters as accommodation for homeless persons is an unsatisfactory approach. This study focuses on lasting housing solutions for homeless persons. As *A Place To Call Home: Housing Solutions for Low-Income Singles in Ontario* reports,

> *"Homes First", a Toronto non-profit group finds that many of those who were quite damaged emotionally can blossom and take charge of their own lives within six months of entering a stable and supportive living environment* (Ontario Task Force on Roomers, Boarders and Lodgers, 1986a, p.181).

The provision of support, whether formal or informal, is another key ingredient of a satisfactory "home." A report entitled *The Case for Long-term Supportive Housing* (1983), which was prepared by the Single Displaced Persons Project in Toronto, noted mounting recognition of the role of support in special needs housing.

> *Appropriate support services will often make the difference between the capacity to reap the full benefits of the investment in housing and the probability of a return to destructive or self-defeating behaviour patterns. It is very old-fashioned thinking to believe that housing alone will turn around psychological and social difficulties. It is a base, not more* (Ontario Task Force on Roomers, Boarders and Lodgers, 1986a, p.181).

Ideally then, housing solutions for homeless persons endeavour to provide permanent, adequate, affordable, secure shelter in a stable living environment with appropriate support services. Related to these essential features of a home is the common view that homeless persons need a "staged" progression of housing types. The first stage is crisis or temporary shelter to solve the immediate problem of the lack of physical shelter. The second stage, transitional shelter, combines temporary shelter with support services designed to assist the distressed, disoriented, or disabled person, to stand on his or her own feet. Subsequently, the formerly homeless person or family needs a stable home environment in a permanent setting and requires support to overcome disorientation and to achieve stability. This third stage does not take into consideration that disorientation may be either a contributing factor to a homeless person's condition or a product of being homeless and that all the homeless person lacks is affordable, adequate shelter.

This model clearly acknowledges that there is a range of needs for shelter, stability and support services among the homeless, who are not a homogenous group. Their needs for housing and support services depend upon physical and mental health, age, family status, and a variety of other characteristics.

A common typology used to describe the permanent needs of the homeless and other special needs groups employs three categories: independent housing; supportive housing; and care or residential facilities (Stoner, 1984; Kinegal, 1989). Recognizing that categorization can blur important exceptions or distinctions among types, this study uses the classification scheme to organize the case study projects.

Independent Housing. Independent housing refers to self-contained units in which the resident is responsible for day-to-day upkeep and personal services. The units are affordable to those of core housing need and offer security of tenure. To be affordable with a central city location, this type of accommodation is likely to be non-profit or social housing. While residents may have a minimum amount of support available within the building for emergency purposes, they function independently. They obtain support through an informal, rather than a formal, network.

Supportive Housing. While it offers a range in amount and type of assistance, supportive housing differs from independent housing in that residents require help with certain tasks or activities on a regular basis. Metropolitan Toronto defines supportive housing as "any community based residential environment with a non-medical care component, the objective of a supportive housing program being to foster independence and promote stability" (Metropolitan Toronto, 1986, p.2). The shelter component may consist of self-contained suites or shared accommodation. Support services apply to physical disabilities, mental disabilities, alcoholism, or other needs. Supportive housing is designed for tenants for whom housing alone is not sufficient: support services ensure the well-being of the tenant and of the housing unit itself. The housing project may not necessarily offer services on site, but project staff assure their availability from among those available in the community.

Care Facilities. Care facilities consist of both shelter and continuing medical and personal support services. Residents are generally dependent upon services supplied by others for their daily needs. Residents typically occupy "beds" rather than suites or rooms. Provincial health ministries license and fund care facilities.

2.4 The Policy Debate

Canadian housing policy has historically given emphasis to subsidy programs and market-place regulations which have assisted homeownership for middle-class Canadians. The needs of the homeless and the inadequately housed urban poor have never received enough attention so as to make the type of progress achieved in the ownership sector. The provision of housing for the homeless and the lower income tenant is and always has been unprofitable for the private sector. Yet public policy has also failed to meet this need.

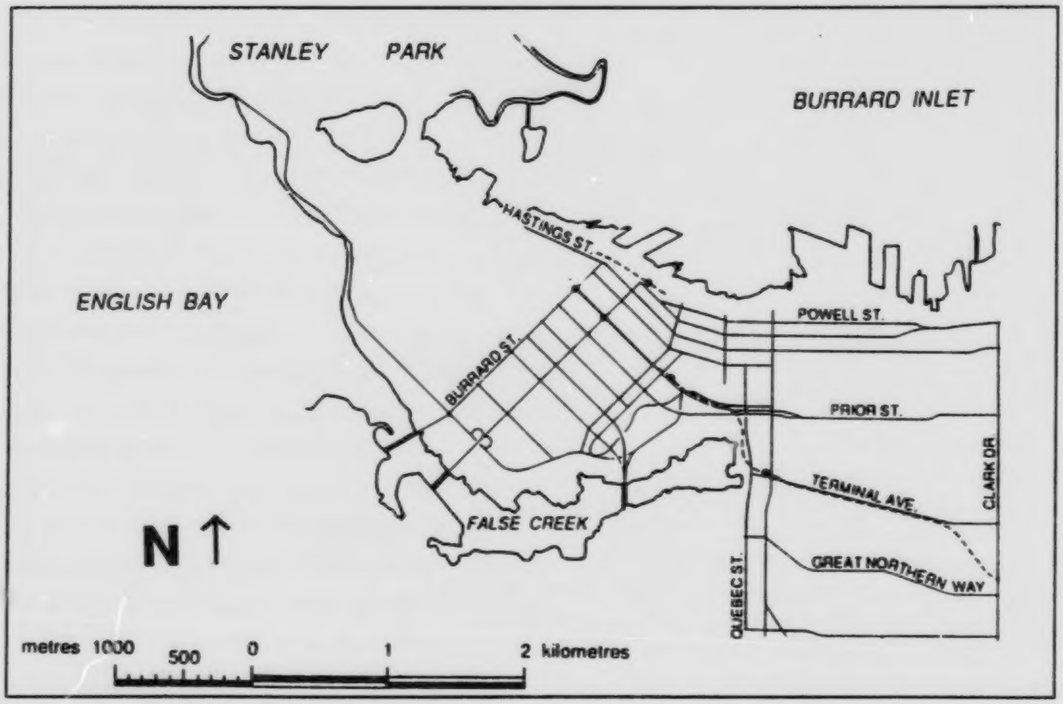
Long-term housing solutions for the homeless must address the larger issues of the general lack of affordable, low-cost housing stock, of the inadequacy of social assistance programs, of the high levels of unemployment, and of the effects of deinstitutionalization. Policy changes to bring more affordable, subsidized individual and family units onto the market must be coupled with increased assistance for a range of support services. These changes must be reinforced with comprehensive programs, adequate funding, and effective legislative initiatives.

This report specifically examines housing initiatives of local organizations and their contribution to improvements in the housing and the living conditions of certain groups of homeless and near homeless people. The lessons learned can point the way for effective public policy intervention to meet the needs of the homeless on a permanent basis and to address the causes of homelessness.

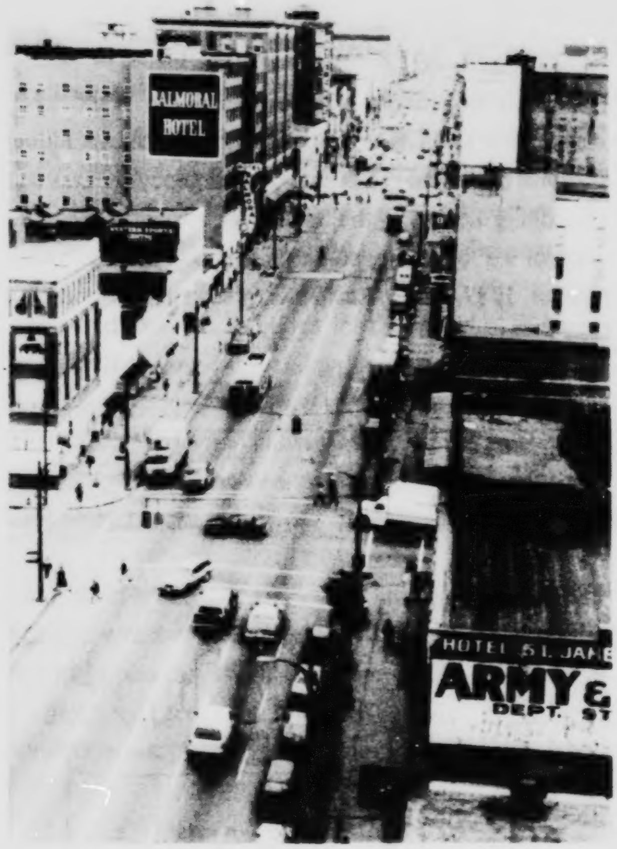
3. The Study Area

3.1 The Vancouver Context

No systematic attempt to estimate the homeless population has been made in Vancouver. Information obtained on the homeless or near-homeless comes from a variety of sources, including published data collected for specific organizations, overnight bed counts of emergency shelters and estimates of service agencies. A survey of lodging houses in the downtown area of Vancouver conducted in the summer of 1989 found a total of 9,236 lodging house units, 8,048 of which were privately owned (Burgess, Austin and Associates, 1989, p.15). Residents of such accommodation



are considered to be homeless because they lack security of tenure and because many pay over 50 percent of their income on shelter. The number of people who are literally without shelter and who are on the street or rely on emergency shelters on a nightly basis should also be included.



Looking east along Hastings Street, the main artery through the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. The residential hotels along Hastings Street are typical of the housing stock in the area. The buildings are three to ten story "single room occupancy" (SRO) hotels built primarily in the early decades of this century. Shops, restaurants and pubs line the first floors of the residential buildings.

An Urban Core Homeless Committee survey conducted in November 1986 counted 76 people living on the street in Vancouver. When the total number of persons staying in temporary shelters is added, the number of people living in downtown Vancouver without adequate, secure, affordable accommodation is in the neighbourhood of 10,000 persons.

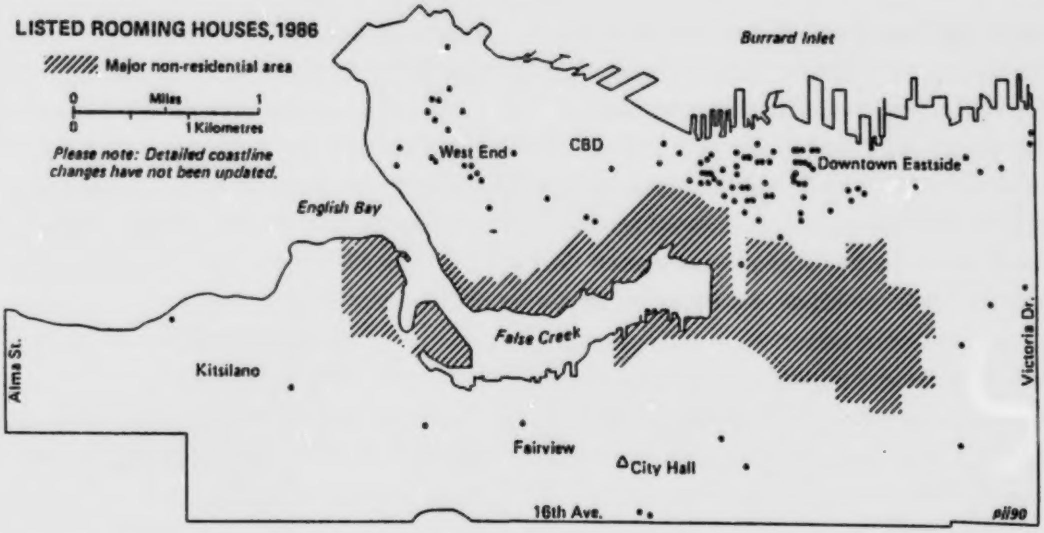
While this situation is disturbing, Vancouver is clearly better off than many cities in North America. Vancouver's homeless situation is one of relative homelessness (e.g. poor quality, insecure housing) as opposed to absolute homelessness. A brief review of the major factors contributing to homelessness in Vancouver follows.

Inadequate Supply of Affordable Rental Housing. A critical factor contributing to homelessness in the Vancouver area is housing market failure in the rental sector. Condominium conversions and demolitions for redevelopment are forcing renter households out of the City or into crowded inadequate accommodations. Three of the four major segments of the City of Vancouver's rental stock are threatened: the purpose-built rental apartments; the secondary suites in some neighbourhoods; and the rooming house stock in and near the Downtown Eastside (Hulchanski, 1989, p.7). The private rental supply market mechanism has failed to function and the demand for affordable rental housing is not being addressed. The estimated percentage of renters in the City of Vancouver in "core housing need" (households that spend more than 30 percent of total income on suitable and adequate housing) rose from 35 percent to 46 percentbetween 1980 and 1985 (McAfee, 1989, p.3). In addition, the number of households paying more than 50 percent of their income on shelter has doubled since 1981 (Murphy *et al.*, 1988, p.30). Vancouver also has a growing number of one person households, many of whom fall into the low income bracket. In 1989, Vancouver experienced one of its most severe rental housing crises in history with a city-wide vacancy rate of 0.3 percent. As Vancouver continues to attract population, more people, including those already in core housing need, compete for a declining stock of affordable housing.

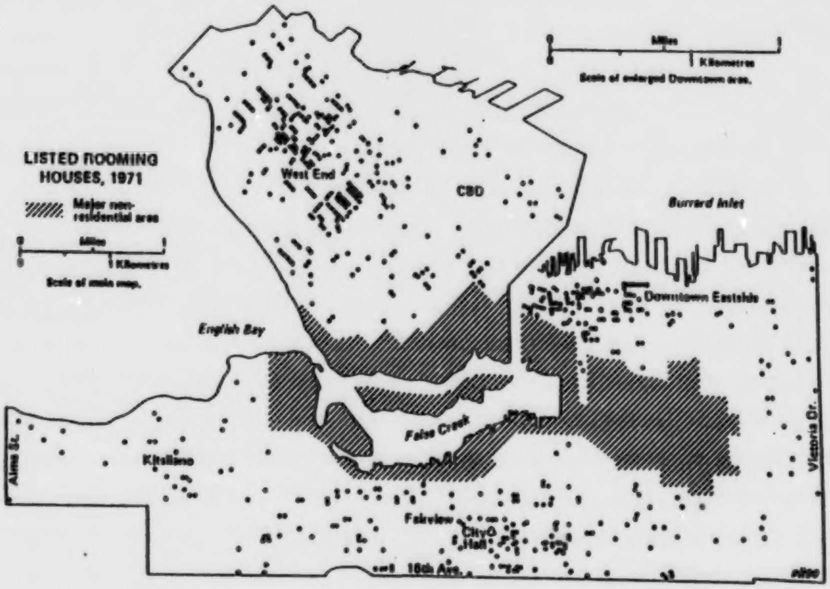
Each year, more low income housing units are lost through conversion, demolition and decay than new ones are constructed to replace them. Residential hotels and rooming houses, which are the main source of housing for people one step above absolute homelessness, are particularly vulnerable. Approximately 3,000 units of this form of housing stock have disappeared in Vancouver in the past decade. Many long-term hotel residents were evicted to accommodate tourists during Expo '86 (Olds, 1988, p.105). In addition to the units demolished or converted for Expo, some of the city's estimated 26,000 "illegal" secondary suites in single family houses are also threatened by a City Hall neighbourhood review process.

Vacancy rates have fallen below one percent at various times in the 1980s. Market theory assumes that supply will meet demand. Still, because low income people do not have the resources to compete in the housing market, they generate social need instead of market demand. Over the past decade, the federal government has subsidized virtually all affordable rental housing starts in Vancouver. However, the number of these subsidized starts is declining.

Mental Health Policies. Increased demand created by deinstitutionalization adds to the shortage of affordable rental accommodation. Vancouver's Riverview Psychiatric Hospital has decreased its patient load from 2,500 in the late 1960s to several hundred in recent years (Hulchanski, 1987a, p.5). The provincial government intends to close this institution completely. Many of those former patients find themselves on the streets of the downtown area of the city. As a result, rising numbers of handicapped and physically or mentally disabled people compete for the diminishing units of affordable housing with the low income earners concentrated in the same area.



There has been a dramatic decline in the low cost small unit rental stock in and around Vancouver's central area. These two maps, compiled by Professor David Ley (UBC Geography Department), show the loss of rooming houses and residential hotels between 1971 and 1986. The maps provide a clear indication of the extent to which low income renters have many fewer affordable housing options in the 1980s, when homelessness became much more common in Vancouver, than they did in the 1960s and early 1970s. Some of the data on these maps is still being checked by Professor Ley.



Unemployment, Poverty and In-come Assistance Trends. The early and mid-1980s were a period of increasing poverty and unemployment in British Columbia. The number of poor families in the province almost doubled in four years from 65,000 in 1980, to 120,000 in 1984(National Council of Welfare, 1985) and real household incomes in Metropolitan Vancouver declined between 1980 and 1985 (Vancouver, 1990). This occurred despite the growth in dual income families. Although 92 percent more people in the province received income assistance in 1984 than in 1981, the allowance has not kept pace with the cost of living (Hulchanski, 1987, p. 41). Growing numbers of people relied on charitable relief and food banks. The working poor in British Columbia faced particular adversity in this past decade. Even if they earned the minimum wage, their incomes fell $2,000 below the Statistics Canada poverty line. The Vancouver regional economy improved markedly in the late 1980s, but unemployment has been slow in returning to pre-recession levels. Vancouver's economy is shifting from a primary resource and tertiary base to a quaternary and service sector economy. Seventy per cent of the provincial labour force is currently working in the service sector, and growth is occurring in the typically low paying and part-time hospitality and tourism industries.

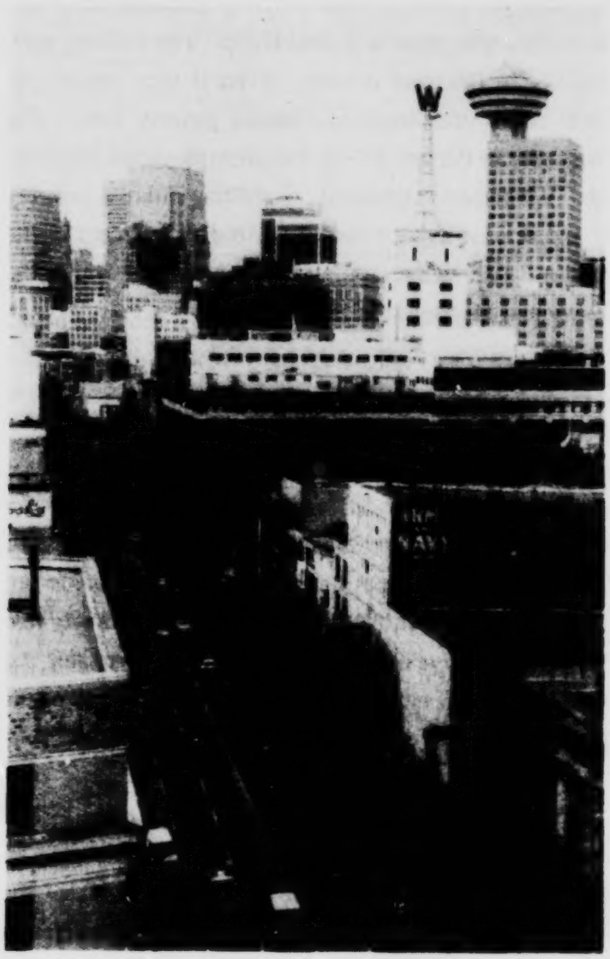
3.2 The Downtown Eastside

The Downtown Eastside is one of Vancouver's oldest, most culturally diverse neighbourhoods. This urban residential community, with a population of approximately 10,000 people, is located adjacent to the central business district of the city. Residents of the Downtown Eastside are primarily single people on modest fixed incomes, 90 percent of whom live below the poverty line (DERA, 1988). The Downtown Eastside is a unique residential area because it provides the greatest concentration of affordable housing in the city, mostly in the form of residential hotels and rooming houses.

Perception of this inner city area as a distinct neighbourhood began to occur in the early 1970s. A local community organization coined the name "Downtown Eastside" to give the area an identity as a neighbourhood. Today some ambiguity exists over the actual boundaries of the Downtown Eastside. Various community groups and government agencies use slightly different boundary definitions. For example, the City of Vancouver's Social Planning Department conducted five surveys of lodging houses and lodging house tenants between 1971 and 1986. It also published a policy plan in 1982. In these six documents, it used four different boundaries for the Downtown Eastside.

The Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA) employs a broad definition of the Downtown Eastside that generally refers to downtown Vancouver excluding the adjacent Strathcona neighbourhood. In its constitution, DERA defines the boundaries as Clark Drive to the east, the waterfront to the north, Burrard Street to the west, and False Creek and Terminal Avenue to the south. DERA selected these boundaries on the basis of the existing housing stock. The group wanted to include the majority of Vancouver's residential hotels and rooming houses under its jurisdiction to help protect this form of housing and its tenants.

In its most recent survey of Downtown Eastside lodging houses and their residents, DERA consciously decided to exclude Strathcona. They described the area as an independent community with a distinct "sense of place" in terms of income, housing, ethnicity and community groups (DERA, 1988, p.1). In addition, Strathcona has a number of characteristics that differentiate it from the Downtown Eastside, Downtown North and Downtown South census tracts. Strathcona is primarily an area with higher income families and in single family dwellings. Because of these demographic, income and housing stock features, homelessness does not pose as great a threat to Strathcona residents as it does to people residing in the other three census tract areas of Vancouver's central area.



The residential hotels in the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood are adjacent to Vancouver's central business district. This proximity places tremendous pressure on land values and creates an economic incentive for conversion or demolition.

In summary, two definitions of the Downtown Eastside are available. The first, broad definition which

DERA uses includes the downtown area in general. The second definition refers more specifically to the residential hotels in the area centred around the Main St. and Hastings St. intersection. For the purposes of this report, references to the Downtown Eastside use the broader definition. It is more inclusive, including all the central area residents who are homeless or are potentially homeless. Unless otherwise noted, data quoted in the following sections represents this definition.

3.3 History of the Downtown Eastside

The Downtown Eastside is the oldest area of Vancouver. It has industry, businesses and residences dating from 1867. The great fire of 1886 almost totally destroyed the area, which was afterwards rapidly rebuilt. The Canadian Pacific Railway's (CPR) selection of Vancouver as its western terminus and its subsequent utilization of its land grant played a critical role in the Downtown Eastside's development. Soon after the railway arrived in 1886, the elite and middle classes moved westward to new homes in the West End and left the Downtown Eastside as a working class and immigrant reception area (Matthews, 1932, p.46).

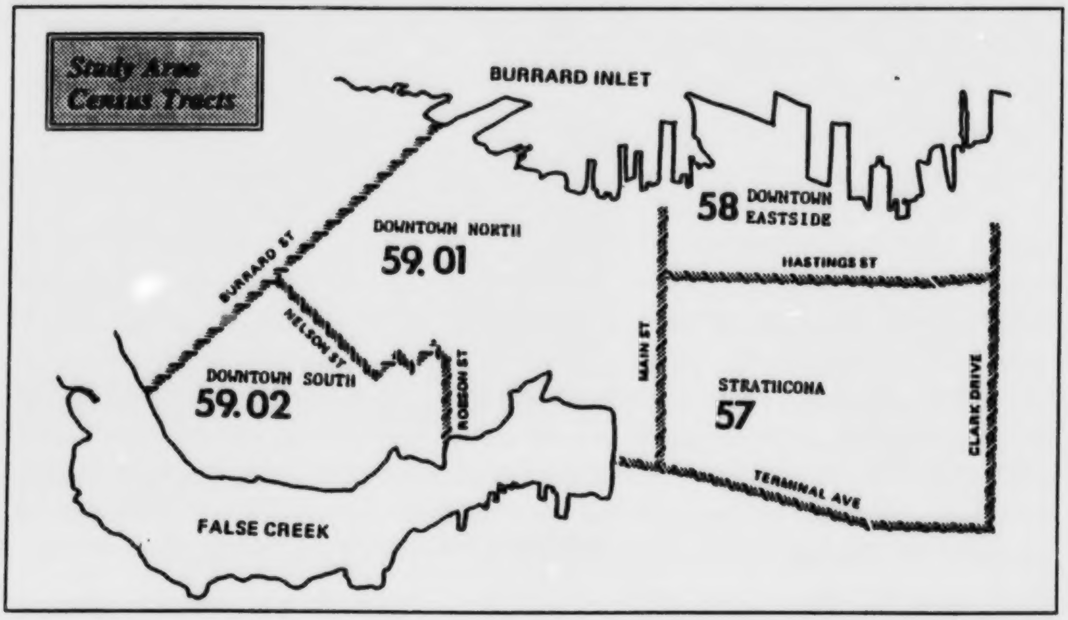
The Downtown Eastside experienced boom and bust cycles until a very important period of expansion occurred between 1893 and 1913. During these years, the steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie, donated $50,000 to erect the Vancouver Public Library at the corner of Main and Hastings. Many rooming houses and residential hotels were built about the same time. They provided the working class and the new immigrants with a cheap place to live close to the canneries and the wood mills along the waterfront. They also housed seasonal workers employed in out-of-town logging and fishing camps.

During the 1930s, the depression seriously affected the lives of Downtown Eastside residents. Many working class residents experienced full or partial unemployment and lacked adequate housing. A few hundred single, transient, unemployed males occupied "jungles" along the Burrard Waterfront and in the False Creek basin until the federal government sent them to relief camps.

By the 1940s, the central business district had shifted westward from the Downtown Eastside. The ethnic character of the community changed considerably when the government evacuated Japanese-Canadian residents during World War Two. After the war, the quality of life steadily declined for residents of the Downtown Eastside. The area was zoned industrial and residential land values fell. Through neglect and deterioration, the community acquired the "skid road" label that led to further neglect. The residential population, primarily composed of unemployed and retired resource workers, steadily decreased from the late 1950s to the early 1970s.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, residents began to demand a voice in local affairs. Community-based groups like DERA, First United Church, and St. James' Social Service Society spoke out on behalf of community residents.

City Council periodically reinforced community-based attempts to improve the quality of life for Downtown Eastside residents, and in particular, the Social Planning Department provided strong support. In 1975, much of the area was rezoned from industrial to residential and commercial schedules in order to retain and encourage existing residential uses. After 1975, the City took advantage of a number of cost-sharing schemes for neighbourhood revitalization, and it approved initiation of a Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) for the Downtown Eastside. In 1978, it organized a local area planning process to obtain community views on the expenditure of NIP funds and to formulate a concept plan for future land use in the community. The local area planning process culminated with the 1982 approval of the Downtown Eastside/Oppenheimer Policy Plan. Also in 1986, the City approved use of federal the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) for lodging houses in the Downtown Eastside. It continued this program until the recent termination of this rental rehab program by the federal government.



Other community and local government efforts to improve the quality of life of Downtown Eastside residents included: conversion of the vacant and deteriorating Carnegie Public Library building into a community centre; development and enforcement of Standards of Maintenance and Fire by-laws; enactment and enforcement of public safety by-laws; closure of a local liquor store; and improvements in street lighting and neighbourhood amenities such as parks. In addition, a number of socially mixed, subsidized housing projects were built in the community during the 1970s and 1980s.

In the early 1980s, community representatives recognized the potentially destabilizing effects of proposed mega-projects like the redevelopment of the north shore of False Creek and Expo '86. They spent considerable time and effort preparing for possible negative impacts, lobbying politicians, working with planners, and raising public awareness. Despite community efforts, Expo-induced pressures resulted in the eviction of 500 to 850 residents from lodging housed in the Downtown Eastside and adjacent areas (Olds, 1988). Several lodging houses were demolished for parking lots and for other purposes.

Fear of more residential dislocation is a major concern in the Downtown Eastside today. The planned redevelopment projects of the north, east and south east shores of False Creek, as well as the south shore of Burrard Inlet surround the community. Moreover, Vancouver's nearby Chinatown is expanding, the central business district is shifting eastward, and general urban redevelopment pressures are occurring.

3.4 Demographic Profile of Downtown Eastside Residents

In 1987, DERA conducted a demographic survey of residents in the Downtown Eastside and their opinions concerning the area's housing stock. The survey describes the average resident of the neighbourhood as

> *a Caucasian male who lives alone. He was born in Canada, but not in British Columbia. He is 51 years old and a welfare/GAIN recipient, with a monthly income of less than $439.00. His average annual income is $5,268...He has not worked in seven years. When he worked, he was employed in construction, mining, logging or service industries. His home is a sleeping or housekeeping room in a hotel (DERA, 1988, p.12).*

A

B

C

A. *This 1927 photograph features the Pennsylvania Hotel at the corner of Carrall and Hastings Streets. These hotels were home for many primary industry workers such as loggers, miners and fishermen. They would work in the interior of B.C. for periods of time and return for the winter break or holidays. The hotels also served new arrivals to the city.*

B. *The Maple Hotel at 177 East Hastings Street in 1935. Note the variable building heights and the street level shops that served people living in the hotels. Today the Maple Hotel has 97 rooms which rent on a weekly and monthly basis.*

C. *The Hotel Patricia at 103 East Hastings Street in 1917. In 1990, this hotel serves a mixed clientele of area residents on a monthly basis and tourists on a nightly basis.*

Source: City of Vancouver Archives

According to the 1986 Census, 8,425 people live in the three Downtown Vancouver sub-areas that DERA uses to define the Downtown East: Downtown Eastside; Downtown North; and Downtown South. With its residents primarily occupying the lodging houses along Granville and Howe Streets, Downtown South has the smallest population of the three tracts. Of the three sub-areas, only the Downtown East experienced a population increase (10.1 percent) between 1981 and 1986. In comparison, the City of Vancouver population grew by only 2.8 percent in the same time period. Unfortunately, the 1986 Census does not accurately estimate the population of the area due to its transient population and the high incidence of homeless people.

Table 3.1 Population Growth in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside

Population	Downtown East CT*	Downtown North CT	Downtown South CT	Total Downtown Eastside
1981	2,507	4,303	1,728	8,538
1986	2,760	3,974	1,691	8,425
Growth	10.1%	-7.6%	-2.1%	0.1%

Source: Statistics Canada, *Canada Census, 1986 Vancouver Part 1, Catalogue #95-167.*

* Census Tract

Compared to other neighbourhoods in Vancouver, the population of the Downtown Eastside has proportionately more elderly people and fewer children. However this situation has changed in the past ten years as noticeably more women and children have moved into the area.

The average length of residence in the area, ten years, makes the Downtown Eastside the second most stable neighbourhood in Vancouver after the Dunbar area (DERA, 1988, p.10). Although many outsiders perceive the area as being a "skid road", the population of the Downtown Eastside is highly stable rather than transient. In a 1982 pamphlet, residents describe themselves in a manner with which most professionals familiar with the area would now agree:

> *Here in the Downtown Eastside [residents] have friends, they are close to shopping, they are centrally located, near the major bus lines, and most important, it is home. Up until now, it is a place they can still afford to live, if only barely. It is an area in which they have chosen to live, a place they wish to see improve and finally a neighbourhood they wish to remain in* (Save the Downtown Eastside Committee, 1982, p.3).

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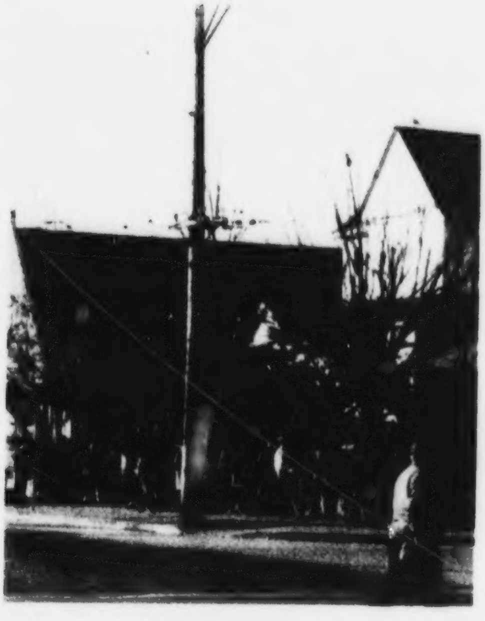


A. *The Carnegie Community Centre is the "living-room" for many Downtown Eastside residents. Located at the corner of hastings and Main Streets, this community centre is the busiest in Vancouver. It has a library, meeting rooms, classrooms, educational programs, recreational equipment, art gallery, and cafeteria.*

B. *Oppenheimer Park is a well used park in the heart of the Downtown Eastside. Softball, Tai Chi, soccer, baseball, feeding the seagulls and general people watching are common activities in the "green lung" of this park-deficient neighbourhood.*

C. *The line-up for food at church-run centres is another common sight in the Downtown Eastside. Income, pension, and welfare levels are too low to meet basic living expenses and many people rely on charity and Vancouver's food banks for help in meeting basic needs.*

A 1985 survey of lodging house tenants in the Downtown area, notes that, in their 10 percent random sample of households in four census tracts (including Strathcona), 90 percent are single people, 8 percent are sharing persons or couples, and 2 percent are families, including single parents (McCririck, 1985, p.6).

The three downtown census tracts include approximately three times as many males as females (Statistics Canada, 1986). The proportion of females to males increased significantly after 1978 when women comprised only 10 percent of the population in the Downtown Eastside but the area remains significantly male-dominated. In total, 6,360 males (75.5 percent) and 2,060 females (24.5 percent) occupy the study area (Vancouver Social Planning Department, 1978, p.21).

The area is culturally and ethnically diverse. About one-third of Downtown Eastside residents were born in a country other than Canada. They are 68 percent Caucasian, 18 percent Oriental, 11.7 percent Native Indian, and 0.6 percent East Indian; and 1.9 percent come from other ethnic groups (DERA, 1988, p.5). Approximately 40 percent of Downtown Eastside residents speak a language other than English on a daily basis.

Many long-term residents of the Downtown Eastside formerly worked in British Columbia's primary resource sector as loggers, seamen, fishermen or longshoremen. Many of them received injuries for which they never won compensation. In fact, 47% of residents in the Downtown Eastside have form of disability, often from work-related accidents (DERA, 1988, p.iii).

The Downtown Eastside is one of the poorest areas of the city; 91 percent of its residents live below the poverty line (Shaylor, 1986, p.8). The vast majority of residents accept welfare/GAIN/GIS payments. As well, 4.1 percent collect unemployment insurance benefits; 20.1 percent have OAS benefits; 2.9 percent receive a veteran's pension; and 1.4 percent hold some other form of pension (DERA, 1988, p.15). According to the DERA survey, only 4.9 percent of the area's population is employed at a full-time occupation, while 2.2 percent of area residents work part-time. Of those employed, 28 percent work in service sector occupations. The average period since residents were last employed is seven years (DERA, 1988, p.16). The average income of all household types is $601.03 per month. If the top 3 percent of the survey is removed from the sample to account for a small number of high income earners, the average monthly income drops to $515.00 (DERA, 1988, p.17). Although incomes in the neighbourhood range widely from a low of $137 to a high of $9,990 per month, only 2 percent have a monthly income greater than $1,600.

A 1982 report written by the "Save the Downtown Eastside Committee " acknowledged that none of the previous demographic surveys of Downtown Eastside residents revealed the true nature of the people behind the statistics:

> *These statistics have been collected many times. They unfortunately provide only numbers. What they do not show is who the people are. In many cases, they are retired working class people, pensioners and disabled workers and veterans. In other words, they are many of the people who helped lay the foundations for the province and the city of Vancouver. When asked, they even fought in wars to protect the prosperity they often saw little of. Many now are old, ill or handicapped and must survive on meagre incomes. They ask only to live in dignity, to have clean livable housing and places to go to be with their friends. These are genuine human beings with interesting pasts who have a wealth of knowledge to share* (Save the Downtown Eastside Committee, 1982, p.3).

The Afton Hotel is a typical privately owned residential hotel in the Downtown Eastside. Located at 249 East Hastings St., the hotel has 40 rooms renting at about $300 per month.

3.5 Housing Stock in the Downtown Eastside

A survey conducted in March 1986 found approximately 8,617 lodging house dwelling units in the Downtown Eastside (City of Vancouver Social Planning Department, 1986). A 1989 survey by Burgess, Austin & Associates estimates 9,236 units, of which 8,048 are privately owned. Despite inconsistencies in these numbers due to survey methods and boundary definitions, the data show that a large stock of lodging house units remains in the area.

The DERA survey of lodging houses and lodging house residents describes the average Downtown Eastside resident as living in

> *a sleeping or housekeeping room with 52 units. He has a 50% probability of having cooking facilities [a hotplate] in his room. There is no shower, bath or toilet in his unit and there are no laundry facilities in the building. His rent is $225.91 per month (51% of his monthly income). He has lived in the unit for 3.9 years and has lived in the community for over 10 years* (DERA, 1988, p.12).

The DERA survey also showed that 77.3 percent of the residents live in private market housing and that 22.7 percent occupy social housing (DERA, 1988, p.20). The vast majority (92.1 percent) of those living in private sector housing rent in residential hotels and rooming houses mostly found in the Downtown East and Downtown North areas. The survey also disclosed that 96.2 percent of all units in the Downtown Eastside are rental units. Co-ops, strata title, and dwellings make up 1.4 percent, 2.4 percent, and 3.5 percent respectively of the remaining units.

The Arco Hotel at 83 West Pender Street is across from the soon to be developed Expo 86 site now know as the "Pacific Place" mega-project. This privately owned residential hotel contains 63 rooms renting at approximately $300 per month.

In the 1970s, planners and politicians adopted the term "Single Room Occupancy" hotel (SRO) to refer to residential hotels and rooming houses which are the most basic rental units provided by the private sector on a monthly basis to low income individuals. At one time, SRO housing was distributed throughout inner city residential neighbourhoods such as the West End and Mount Pleasant. Since the 1970s, the stock of residential hotels and rooming houses has been drastically reduced to make way for redevelopment. The Downtown East-side has the last concentration of low rent housing for very poor single people who are one step above living in emergency shelters or on the street.

SRO hotels typically offer the basic shelter of a small, sparsely furnished room with a hand basin and with access to shared bathroom facilities in a central hall. Approximately 85 percent of private hotel units do not have toilet, shower or bath facilities in rooms (DERA, 1988, p.23). The hotel supplies a bed, table, chair, bedding and towels but no maid service, laundry facilities or telephone. Residents have access to a hotel phone in the lobby. Although a desk clerk is on duty 24 hours a day, the front door of the hotel is locked at night. All residents have keys to the front door and to their rooms, for which they pay a deposit of $5.00. Hotel management allows visitors in rooms between certain hours at no charge, but, if guests stay overnight, it charges residents a fee of $5.00.

The Europe Hotel Apartments is a well known historic building on Powell Street in the Gastown section of the Downtown Eastside. This 84 unit hotel was renovated in the early 1980s. It is a federally subsidized non-profit housing project.

Although some owners permit residents to use hotplates in their hotel rooms, others often prohibit cooking facilities in sleeping units. The DERA survey notes that only 50.6 percent of residents in market SRO hotel units have cooking arrangements in their units (DERA, 1988, p.21). Without cooking facilities, residents must eat in local restaurants or at Club Alex, a subsidized City-run cafeteria in the Downtown Eastside. Residents of the market SROs in the area rely on meals served at the various missions and at Club Alex twice as often as social housing residents (DERA, 1988, p.22).

The vast majority of residential hotels and rooming houses were constructed prior to 1945. The addition of private dwelling units in the downtown area dropped considerably between 1945 and 1990 when government funded housing projects represented the only new units. The area currently has 1,188 of these "socially based" units (Burgess, Austin & Associates, 1989, p.15).

The vacancy rate for all housing units in the downtown area was approximately 15 percent during the 1970s and the early 1980s. For example, in 1985, the vacancy rate amounted to 16 percent (McCririck, 1985, p.5). However, with the pressures of Expo '86 and of subsequent increases in downtown land development, the vacancy rate in the central core has steadily declined. Demolition, conversion and closure of lodging house units has compounded the pressures of development. Although no vacancy figures are available, recent information indicates that there are far fewer vacancies in the area. Since 1988, the City of Vancouver has experienced a rental housing crisis that has placed these types of units in higher demand as affordable units are lost to development or gentrification.

Observers often accuse hotel owners in the area of not maintaining their buildings. They complain that owners use capital investments to renovate commercial assets like on-site pubs and that they make no improvements to hotel rooms and other related facilities. Many units have overloaded electrical outlets, dirty or non-functioning shared toilet facilities, ineffective security, and vermin infestations. One DERA worker suggests that all SRO hotels break the law in one way or another but offer a trade-off between affordability and living conditions (Konrad and Mompel, 1987).

Until recently, hotel residents had no legal protection under the province's *Residential Tenancy Act*. Instead, under the *Innkeepers Act*, they were "guests" without cause for a legitimate landlord-tenant agreement. This Act did not stipulate the amount charged as a damage deposit or regulate the repayment of deposits charged. Residents had no security of tenure or basic tenants' rights and eviction could occur without notice. However, after more than ten years of lobbying, a June 1989 amendment included residents of SRO units in the *Residential Tenancy Act*. As yet, the effectiveness of these changes in protecting SRO residents is unknown.

3.6 Summary

In summary, the area inhabited by Downtown Eastside residents is rich in ethnic and cultural diversity but poor in affordable, adequate, secure housing. Existing in a position of relative disadvantage in terms of income, education, age, and employment, the residents have little ability to compete in a market characterized by low vacancy rates and rising rents. With a limited supply of social housing units available, too many pay an increasing amount of their income on poor quality housing. Those who lack the resources to compete in the housing market join the growing ranks of the homeless.

Part II

Case Studies

4. The Organizations

Non-profit or voluntary groups such as the Salvation Army, the churches and the missions have traditionally provided services to the nation's homeless and poor. Typically, their resources are meagre compared to government agencies and they face an uphill battle to furnish good quality services consistent with their aims. Nonetheless, these organizations are well-suited to the task because they are local initiatives, understand client needs, often have democratic structures, and can respond quickly to changes in needs (Wolfe and Jay, 1990). Three organizations have been selected as case studies of groups sharing a commitment to the people that they serve within a neighbourhood beleaguered by homelessness.

This section presents profiles of the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association, the First United Church Housing Society and the St. James' Social Services Society by reviewing their history, the services they offer, their membership, staff, and housing activities.

4.1 Downtown Eastside Residents' Association (DERA)

History. Since the emergence of the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association in 1973, the Downtown Eastside area has changed physically, socially, economically and politically. No longer referred to as "Skid Road", politicians, bureaucrats and citizens consider the area to be a "neighbourhood" and a "community."

DERA evolved out of a project initiated by Peter Davies, a social planner for the City of Vancouver who had previously been a community worker with the First United Church. DERA's original office was located in the First United Church on East Hastings St. Davies acquired initial funding through a federal government Peoples' Aide Program and hired ten non-professional local people to assist area residents with housing, health, and social assistance problems. The Peoples' Aide project was not overly successful because it, like many previous Downtown Eastside-based projects, focused on solving problems for the individual rather than the broader community.

DERA's first President was Bruce Erickson, one of the original Peoples' Aide workers and the person who helped DERA incorporate as a non-profit society in August 1973. Both Bruce Erickson and a subsequent DERA president, Libby Davies (Peter Davies' daughter), were elected as aldermen to Vancouver City Council in the early 1980s.

After incorporation, the initial work of DERA members focused on the community. The organization desired the revitalization of the Downtown Eastside in ways that did not result in eviction, displacement or hardship for area residents. It secured funding from the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) for the creation of the Carnegie Community Centre in an historic building once slated for demolition. The centre became the hub of activity for the neighbourhood and the Association, and it is now known as the area's "living room." DERA members also lobbied to upgrade Oppenheimer Park and to create a waterfront park called CRAB (Create a Real Available Beach). With the intention of improving the health and safety conditions for neighbourhood residents, they pressed the City of Vancouver to establish a sprinkler bylaw, to increase lighting in back alleys, and to close the liquor store at Main and Hastings.

Ongoing campaigns today include the elimination of alcohol substitutes like Lysol and cooking wine for sale by local stores, the banning of knives from bars, the struggle to increase welfare rates and social services for area residents, and the protection of residents under the Residential Tenancy Act. DERA continues to fight for affordable housing, access to park space and recreational facilities, decent incomes, safer streets and community-based planning process.

DERA Objectives

To keep ourselves informed about the life of our community.

To educate ourselves in ways of improving life in our community.

To act collectively to bring about the changes necessary for improving quality of life in our community.

To co-operate freely and honestly with organization and people willing to assist us improve the life of our community.

To expose and publicize the inadequacies we discover in the laws, regulations and services that are enacted and provided for us.

To fight the indifference and corruption we experience and become aware of.

To pursue our objectives in a spirit of good will and unity.

Services. DERA staff provide free information, advice and advocacy services to area residents on issues such as welfare rights, housing conditions, pensions, unemployment insurance and legal aid. DERA also helps residents complete income tax returns, supports welfare hearings and appeals, assists in relocating evictees and follows up complaints about hotel conditions. DERA executive members and staff participate in numerous area and city-wide organizations including the Carnegie Centre Association, the Urban Core Workers' Association, and the Vancouver Waterfront Coalition. DERA also actively plans, builds and manages new non-profit housing projects for neighbourhood residents using the federal/provincial social housing supply programs.

Membership. Membership in DERA is open to any person who resides in the area between Burrard Street on the west, Clark Drive on the east, the waterfront on the north and False Creek on the south. This area has about 10,000 people who generally live in residential hotels and rooming houses throughout the downtown core. Most downtown issues, therefore, are Downtown Eastside issues. Membership is restricted to residents who live in this area to ensure that DERA remains a voice of the Downtown Eastside community. DERA has a registered membership of about 4,500.

Membership meetings take place once a month at the Carnegie Centre. DERA's constitution requires that a 10-member executive committee be elected annually from the membership at large. Members are responsible for initiating and voting on policy which is then carried out by DERA staff. Because over one-third of the membership is Chinese, meetings are conducted in English and Cantonese. All meetings provide a forum for open discussion and debate on community issues and concerns. Guest speakers often address meetings on matters of particular interest to the Downtown Eastside. All meetings are open to non-members.

Staff. DERA staffing levels fluctuate considerably with the availability of government grants. Since the mid-1970s, Vancouver City Council has given DERA an annual grant to hire an organizer and pay some of the overhead costs of the organization. Periodically, City Council has challenged this funding, owing to friction between some of its members and DERA's staff. However, during the last five years, it has regularly approved the grant. Other funding sources include job development grants from the federal government, DERA seniors fund raising activities, union grants, provincial ministry grants, and law foundation grants. In 1989, DERA operated with seven primarily full-time workers and approximately 30 regular volunteers.

Housing. During the late 1970s, DERA established a housing society with the aim of assisting other organizations to develop housing projects, to lobby for housing units, and to focus on housing problems in the community. Despite one unsuccessful attempt at purchasing a residential hotel, DERA's initial policy was to remain out of the direct development, construction and operation of housing projects.

DERA changed its Housing Society in 1983 as a result of dissatisfaction with the housing projects that others were producing and managing. In addition, members of the Main and Hastings Committee wanted to do something with the site of a former liquor store and felt that housing developed on the site would serve as "retribution for past injustices." Although that particular site was inappropriate for housing, DERA obtained another site with the assistance of the City of Vancouver Social Planning Department. The City offered a 25 percent write-down on the market value of the land for the new site and CMHC supplied the funding. In February 1985, the 56-unit DERA Co-op run by members for members opened its doors.

Since 1985, DERA has been involved with four other housing developments. The 153 unit Four Sisters Co-op opened in the spring of 1987. Named after Vancouver's four sister cities, the theme of the project is peace and harmony. In 1987, DERA also took over operation of Marie Gomez, a 76 unit project in the Downtown Eastside after the sponsoring group experienced operational difficulties. A year later, the DERA Housing Society opened Tellier Towers, a 90-unit housing project for seniors over 45 years of age. In 1990, DERA opened the 114 unit Pendera, its fifth housing project in the Downtown Eastside.

A Board of Directors comprised of DERA Executive Board members directs the Downtown Eastside Residents Housing Society. A coordinator is responsible for all housing project development, negotiation, and coordination. An additional person supervises the operation of housing projects where required and is usually the only staff member who receives direct funding from the Housing Society. DERA itself provides the Coordinator's salary. Historically, the Housing Board has passed broad enabling motions allowing the Coordinator to make decisions on behalf of the Society.

In addition to developing projects, DERA works for affordable, decent housing in the Downtown Eastside in other ways. It has been the catalyst in involving area residents in planning for the impact of nearby mega-projects including the 1986 World's Fair, the Port of Vancouver redevelopment projects, and the False Creek north shore redevelopment projects.

4.2 The First United Church

First United Church

We envision our ministry as both to enable persons to survive and grow within the system that exists and to challenge that system, working for creative change towards a healthier and more just socio-economic climate.

History. Located in the heart of Vancouver on East Hastings Street, the First United Church is one of seventy United Churches in the Greater Vancouver area. It has a century-old history of community involvement through "good works and charitable deeds." The United Church of Canada supports the First United Church as a ministry or Mission to the Downtown Eastside. First United has a small congregation in the area.

Services. First United Church is concerned with social justice as well as the spiritual well-being of residents within its ministry. The services provided by the Mission include advocacy work on behalf of welfare recipients, a soup kitchen, a food bank, an outreach school for native children, and a clothing bank. First United assists or advises housing organizations such as the 127 Housing Society and the Downtown Eastside Womens' Centre, and it develops new housing through the First United Church Housing Society.

Membership. Membership on the Board of the Housing Society consists of people employed in careers such as real estate, law, accounting, the church, architecture or social work. Although most have a history of involvement in and commitment to the area, they are not required to be Downtown Eastside residents. The Society is now absorbed with an unresolved debate over whether the Board should represent the wider community or the Downtown Eastside by electing members from the area and from its projects.

Staff. The Church employs several community workers and support staff to deliver advocacy services and Church programs. Community workers assist residents of First United Church projects on matters relating to accommodation, but they have only a limited amount of time for housing related issues. The First United Church Housing Society itself has no full time staff. Instead, individual housing projects hire maintenance and operational staff.

Housing. Formation of the First United Church Housing Society emerged from concerns about general housing conditions in the designated mission area of the Church. In the early 1970s, street workers conducted visits to local rooming houses in order to deal with substance abuse and related crisis situations. They were appalled at the substandard physical condition of the rooming houses they visited. Development of two mega-projects, Expo '86 and B.C. Place, threatened the stock of inexpensive rooming houses and residential hotels in the area. However, it was the forced eviction of long-term tenants from Chinatown's Stratford Hotel in March 1981 which precipitated the direct involvement of the First United Church in the development of housing.

At that time, First United Church decided to carried out an extensive investigation of Vancouver's housing situation. Lawrence Bantleman conducted the research under contract and produced a report in 1981 titled "No Lasting City." The report examined the housing crisis in the Downtown Eastside and presented a proposal for a church sponsored housing project in the area.

Initial involvement of the First United Church consisted of start-up contributions for several social housing projects including the Gastown Mens' Residence. Church representatives also served on the Tenant Selection Committee for projects developed by the City of Vancouver Civic Buildings Department.

In order to become fully involved in the provision of housing, the Church established a registered non-profit housing society in 1981 to operate as the legal housing development and management arm of the First United Church. The mandate of the Society consisted of providing affordable housing in the Downtown Eastside. Early Board members were committed to empowering tenants of First United Church housing projects, to improving their representation at Board meetings, and to fostering a sense of community in the projects.

Church members drew up and reviewed a draft constitution and by-laws for the Housing Society. Their major concern included accountability and responsibility of the Society with respect to Church space. They are also determined that the majority of Directors should be members of the United Church. In August 1981, the Society held its First Annual General Meeting and elected a Board of Directors. The 10-member Board of Directors and interested members initially met bi-monthly while negotiating with CMHC for its first housing project.

Construction of the 70 unit Bill Hennessy Place at a site on Jackson Street at Hastings started in May 1983. The first tenants moved in July 1984, marking the 100-year anniversary of the presence of a United Church Mission in Downtown Vancouver. A second project, the # unit Jenny Pentland Place, opened on January 1987. The 33 unit Ledingham Place, the most recent housing project built by the Society, was completed in March 1988.

The last few years have been a difficult period for the Housing Society. Board members apparently feel that the philosophy and goals of the Society need to be re-evaluated. Early optimism and enthusiasm about the possibilities of social housing in alleviating some of the problems of the poor have been replaced with a sense of disillusionment about what the Society has been able to achieve. Members are unsure about the future direction the Society should take. They see the changing housing needs of the Downtown Eastside and they are unclear about their role. They are concerned that some of the challenges associated with sponsoring housing of this type cannot be managed with the limited resources of a volunteer group. A recent Board decision to hire a management company to handle building maintenance and bookkeeping in its three housing projects is an indication of this uncertainty.

4.3 St. James' Social Services Society

History. The origins of St. James' Social Service Society are inextricably linked with the history of one woman, May Gutteridge. While working at the University of British Columbia Library in 1960, Ms. Gutteridge felt the calling for total devotion to the church. She spoke with Father Hulford of St. James' Anglican Church on Cordova St. in the Downtown Eastside about putting her faith into action. In February 1961 she began working with the church's pensioners' club which at that time was very disorganized. The majority of the seniors with whom she dealt lived in the rooming houses and the residential hotels. The housing conditions were bleak. The seniors, primarily men, were very poor, and their health conditions were far from acceptable.

St. James' Social Services Society

"We are a Christian organization and we seek to help peoples' souls. We believe that you give help with no conditions attached to it such as forcing people to sing for their supper. We are free with our financial assistance as well when required. We follow a diverse approach, and try not to lecture or judge people. We believe in plenty of self-analysis. The first rule in a Christian ministry is do not judge -- offer help. We take care of our alumni, and try to offer a family feeling, even to those with severe mental health problems such as the 'hard to house.'"

-- Robert White, interview, 1989.

As May Gutteridge became more knowledgeable about the conditions of the people in the Downtown Eastside, she realized that existing private or public social services did not meet many of their needs. The pensioners' club provided an opportunity for her and her co-workers to branch out and address these unmet needs. She began dealing with native Indian women, people with psychiatric problems, and alcoholics, and she became involved with many other social welfare issues. By 1972 the St. James'

Social Service Society had developed so much that it moved to its own separate location in the Downtown Eastside and incorporated itself in 1975. Today the expanded services require buildings throughout the Downtown Eastside, including virtually an entire block on the north side of the 300 block on Powell Street.

May Gutteridge was honoured with the Order of Canada in 1982 and with an honourary degree from Simon Fraser University in 1987. Although she has retired, she continues to serve on the Board of Directors and the Executive Team of the Society.

As the Saint James' Social Service Society is an Anglican organization, its underlying philosophy is Christian, albeit one uniquely steeped in the social context and realities of the Downtown Eastside. The staff and workers care about peoples' needs and respond with religious commitment. Their philosophy is a holistic, pragmatic one that inspires actions on behalf of the residents and the neighbourhood.

Saint James' is a social services organization registered as a non-profit society. It grew out of and is affiliated with Saint James' Anglican Church on Cordova Street. A number of departments organize its various services including several housing projects. Funding for Society activities comes from numerous sources including the Provincial Ministry of Social Services and Housing, the Ministry of Health, the British Columbia Housing Management Corporation (BCHMC), the City of Vancouver, CMHC, Employment and Immigration Canada, Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services, and donations and revenues from the Society's projects.

Services. The Society offers a wide array of services to its clients as well as the general public, including:

- temporary and permanent housing;
- emergency help (bus tickets, bags of groceries, clothing vouchers, good vouchers, and Alex Centre/Marl Cafe meals);
- administration of welfare cheques;
- crafts workshop;
- furniture store;
- moving van;
- home support services (cleaning, personal care, laundry and food services);
- tailoring; and

- family counselling and education (parenting programs, stress management, nutrition education, children's program and music therapy).

Membership. A Board of Directors elected from the membership runs the Society. Recently, the Society has made an effort to ensure that Board members have some relationship with the ministries to prevent secularization of the Board. The Board meets monthly. It is responsible for establishing the overall direction of the Society and its policies. An Executive Team, which oversees the management of daily operations, consists of members of the Board and others. The Society has organized different aspects of its work into departments, each with a coordinator. At present, two individuals who supervise all aspects of the operation share the Executive Directorship.

Staff. The Saint James' Social Service Society is a large organization with 148 staff, most of whom are full-time paid personnel. Many volunteers and students on practicums from various nursing and social work institutions in the Lower Mainland also contribute their time. In the past, the Society has experienced difficulty with high turnover rates, due to lower than average wage rates. The Society has attempted to raise wages. Recently, the staff of Victory House unionized and affiliated with the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3232. They are presently negotiating their first contract.

Housing. Housing is a natural outcome of all the other services offered by the Saint James' Social Service Society. Workers at the Society were highly dissatisfied with housing conditions in the Downtown Eastside, particularly for the mentally disabled. As early as 1963, the Society operated a shelter called Maverick House to alleviate these conditions. In 1978, the organizational structure was changed and it became known as Powell Place, an emergency shelter for women and children in crisis. Other lodges and shelters set up in the 1970s and 1980s ranged from temporary to permanent shelters and from independent apartment units to intermediate care facilities. The Society currently supplies over 100 units or beds. As well, St. James' now runs Triage, an emergency shelter, and Florence Apartments on Powell Street. In June 1986 the Society opened Santiago Lodge with 25 fully furnished studio apartment units providing independent housing for mentally ill clients. May's Place Community Home for the Terminally Ill, a six bed hospice, will soon be opened.

Despite its successes, the Society is unsure of its desire to continue in the housing development business. It feels that its energies are drained. Furthermore, it notes that the nature of mental illness in the Downtown Eastside has been worsening in the last few years. While the Society used to provide personal care, it now refers more than one third of its clients to other agencies. Coping with referrals now requires increasing numbers of staff with enhanced skill levels. The nature of the Society's clientele is such that, if it were to close, some residents would have to return to Riverview Psychiatric Hospital.

4.4 Summary

In summary, these organizations possess three characteristics that set them apart from other building and operating housing in the Downtown Eastside. First, all three share a similar focus on the Downtown Eastside. The three groups commonly work together on the broader issues affecting the area. Secondly, as non-profit organizations, all three face limitations due to financial constraints, in contrast to the City of Vancouver Non-Revenue Housing Division. Although the City's Division operates under the same federal and provincial housing programs as the non-profit groups, it relies on salaried City staff for the planning and operation of its buildings. Finally, all three groups are multi-service organizations that offer a host of services and activities to their client groups, including housing. In each case, the organization did not originally set out to develop housing. Rather, all three expanded into this field as the need arose.

The three groups differ in that two are religious, operated by churches, while the third is community-based. Local boards do not solely run the religious organizations, whereas DERA's Board consists only of Downtown Eastside residents. Philosophies and goals, as well as approaches to housing provision, vary among the groups. St. James', in particular, has carved for itself a niche in service provision to ex-psychiatric patients.

5.0 The Projects

Each of the case study housing projects is categorised as independent housing, supportive housing, or care facility. Two housing projects, DERA's Four Sisters Co-op and Tellier Tower are considered independent housing for the purposes of this study. Both provide self-contained apartment units and cater to tenants who are able to manage on a daily basis without assistance

Three projects are categorized as supportive housing: First United Church's Bill Hennessy Place and Ledingham Place; and Saint James' Cecilia House. The two First United Church projects were placed in this category because, although they intend to provide independent living accommodation, some of the tenants living there are considered to be "harder to house" than those living in DERA's independent projects and consequently need more of a supportive living arrangement. Cecilia House furnishes a supportive living environment for graduates of other Saint James' programs.

Victory House is the only case study project that is considered a care facility. Although not formally designated as a long-term care facility, the services and the amenities offered by Victory House enables it to serve clients who might otherwise need the type of care offered by a care facility.

Key aspects of each project are described: the facility; the residents; the units; the support services; the planning and design; the funding; and the management and operation. A section on problems and issues is also included.

5.1 Four Sisters Housing Co-operative, Independent Housing, DERA

DERA achieved both practical and political goals in developing the Four Sisters Housing Co-op. Their practical goals included providing permanent accommodation and security of tenure for Downtown Eastside residents, in self-contained accommodation rather than sleeping or housekeeping rooms. This objective directly responded to the need apparent from DERA's waiting list for accommodations. Of the 2,000 people on the list, 1,500 expressed a preference for bachelor apartments (rooms with private kitchens and bathrooms) instead of sleeping rooms.

The Four Sisters project also furthers DERA's political goals. DERA wanted to preserve the Downtown Eastside as a place for families to live, and, in fact it encouraged families from outside the Downtown Eastside to reside there. The family-oriented Four Sisters Co-op helped serve as a justification for the development of a nearby waterfront site as CRAB park, which has now become an important meeting and recreational place. The Four Sisters site also protected the Downtown Eastside from proposals for a water-filled canal and roadway. The renovated building was strategically located on the route for many of these proposals, an old right-of-way through Downtown Vancouver the to B.C. Place stadium. In addition, DERA wanted to prevent the eastward expansion of the commercial uses in Gastown and the potential gentrification of the Downtown Eastside, particularly along the north shore. The strategic location of the

Four Sisters Housing Co-operative	
Category	Independent Housing
Target Group	Mixed Income Families and Singles
Opened Date	1987
Address	151 Powell Street
No. of Units	153
No. of Residents	Approx. 300
Rent Supplement	43% of units
Unit Types	90 bachelor 26 one bedroom 20 two bedroom 17 three bedroom
Management	Co-operative Board of Directors
Building Type	Mixed -- two new construction, one rehabilitation
Funding Program	CMHC Co-operative Housing Program (pre-1986)
Architect	Davidson/Yuen Partners
Project Cost	$6,000,000 ($39,200/unit)

shore. The strategic location of the Four Sisters project assisted this goal by "claiming" a "prime" site.

The Facility. Four Sisters Housing Co-operative opened in the spring of 1987 on the site of the old Fleck Brothers Warehouse at Alexander and Columbia Street. It is named after Vancouver's four sister cities, Edinburgh, Scotland, Odessa, USSR, Yokohama, Japan, and Guangzhou, China. The co-op consists of three buildings surrounding a common courtyard. One of the buildings is the rehabilitated 5-storey Fleck building, and the other two are newly constructed. The complex contains a courtyard with a play-area for children secured from the street by a gate. Seventy parking stalls are located under the buildings.

Common areas in the Four Sisters consist of six rooms. One will become day care space when funding is available. An office/board room is located on the main floor. The buildings have their

On the right is the south face of the Four Sisters Housing Co-ooperative. On the left is the 85 unit Columbia House project which is managed by the Affordable Housing Advisory Association. The Four Sisters courtyard and childrens' play are is between the two projects. The 153 unit Four Sisters Co-op consists of new construction and the rehabilitiaon of an existing building.

own roof garden, some of which have barbecue areas and garden and lawn space. The entire complex is accessible to wheelchairs with the exception of the roof garden on the renovated building.

The Residents. Members of the Four Sisters co-op are a diverse group. They represent different household types including families with children, older single people, and couples. All are low-income households or households who can afford lower end of market rent. Some formerly lived in the Downtown Eastside, and others did not. The range of unit types reflects both this diversity and DERA's goal of providing family housing in the inner city. Approximately 300 residents with 70 children live in Four Sisters.

DERA believes that good member selection is the key to a successful project. To accomplish this, DERA ensures that members are involved in the selection process. It holds training sessions for members who wish to participate in the selection of future residents through the membership

This is the renovated portion of the Four Sisters Housing Co-operative. Units on this side have a 180 degree view of burrard Inlet and the north shore mountain range.

committee. The selection process is comprised of an initial screening of DERA's waiting list, an orientation meeting, a personal interview using a questionnaire, a short list of applicants, and a final selection.

According to staff, membership in the co-op is fairly stable. The co-op requires a 60 day notice period for households moving out, as required by the *B.C Co-operative Association Act*. This provision gives the member selection process time to find the right members for available suites. In general, subsidized units are easier to fill than low end of market units.

The Units. The residential units are designed to accommodate households ranging from singles to families with children. The three buildings 153 units are primarily bachelor apartments. This reflects the large proportion of single person households in the Downtown Eastside. The unit size ranges from 360 sq. ft for a bachelor suite to 1,100 sq. ft. for a 3-bedroom unit.

Four Sisters Housing Co-operative

Unit Types	No. of Units	% of Total	Avg. Size	Avg. Rent (Aug. '89)
Bachelor	90	59%	360 sq.ft.	$262
One Bedroom	26	17%	500	$333
Two Bedroom	20	13%	750	$419
Three Bedroom	17	11%	1400	$493

Support Services. Various co-op committees and DERA itself provide services for co-op members. For example, every summer, the childcare committee organizes a day camp for children three days per week. It receives funding from the Challenge program, a federal summer employment plan. Recently, the co-op purchased play equipment for its day care room. Older residents participate in a new DERA sponsored activity called Ship-Shape, the Seniors Health and Independence Program. It is a 3-year project funded by Health and Welfare Canada that organizes activities like day trips, classes, and community activities. The project has an office outside of the co-op in Gastown, and it utilizes a full-time Coordinator. The program is open to residents over 45 years of age who reside in any of the DERA housing projects.

Planning and Design. Planning for the Four Sisters Co-op commenced in 1983. DERA feels the process was delayed by about a year because of the proposal to house families. CMHC and City staff involved in the project believed that the Downtown Eastside should remain solely an area for single people, particularly older people. Past housing developments in the area reflected this assumption. Before CMHC would approve the project, they required a list of names of prospective families to confirm the demand for family units. Funds that came from CMHC's Proposal Development Fund to assist with pre-project expenses ran out because of this delay. The City has since become supportive of family housing in the area.

While DERA has a good understanding of the kind of housing that people in the community want, it felt in principle that residents should be involved in the planning process. For example, while

The protected yet open courtyard and childrens' play area of the Four Sisters Housing Co-operative can be seen from many of the units. This courtyard also allows a considerable amount of light to enter unit windows.

the coordinator had authority from the Board to make day-to-day decisions, he received guidance from the broad parameters devised by the Co-op's Board, which was established early in the process. The architect went through gaming exercises with the design committee and the Board in order to flesh out some of the larger conceptual issues. In addition, the landscape committee made decisions about the gardens prior to occupancy. Despite such involvement, the nature of the planning, design and construction process meant that, in fact, the coordinator did make many independent decisions.

DERA has developed a good working relationship with a local architectural firm, Davidson/Yuen Partners. Because of the competitive nature of the social housing unit allocation process, DERA has confirmed the firm's confidence by taking the novel step of making it the Association's architects on an ongoing basis. The firm won an Architectural Institute of British Columbia award in 1988 for overall merit of design for the Four Sisters Co-operative.

One significant stumbling block in the design process was a decision to put a gate in the lane between the Four Sisters buildings to completely enclose the courtyard and to ensure safety for children. However, because lanes are a fire access route, the City Engineering Department firmly opposed the decision. The gated laneway continues to cause problems for the Co-op and illustrates the challenge of providing family housing with adequate play space in central city areas. Furthermore, the elevators pose a problem from a physical point of view. Frequent breakdowns in the one elevator per building make access difficult. Two elevators may have been preferable despite the increased costs.

Financing. The Four Sisters Co-op is funded under the 'old' pre-1986 CMHC Co-operative Housing Program. Allocation of units for Four Sisters under that program occurred through a unique agreement between DERA and two other key organizations in the Downtown Eastside. A group comprised of First United Church, DERA and the City of Vancouver's Civic Buildings Department Non-Revenue Housing Division had earlier agreed not to increase land prices in the Downtown Eastside by bidding for the same sites. The group also lobbied for extra units for the Downtown Eastside to compensate for those expected to be lost as a result of Expo '86. They successfully obtained a total of 130 units to split between themselves. However, the groups found that a one third share of 130 units (or 43 units each) was not financially viable in the Downtown Eastside. Since DERA already had the Four Sisters site tied up with $75,000 borrowed from a trade union pension fund, refundable at that time with interest, the other groups surrendered their share of the units to DERA. The 130 units were still not feasible. As a result, CMHC provided an extra 23 units for a total of 153 units.

Nevertheless, the project was still not financially viable. DERA proposed that the City of Vancouver write down the land by 25 percent, something the city had been doing for many years for some social housing projects. According to the *Vancouver Charter*, expenditure agreements require a two-thirds Council majority vote, but a majority vote in favour of the project did not appear likely. The City's Social Planner then determined that, when the lease expires after 60 years, and when the property reverts to the City, the latter would have incurred no costs due to the future increase in the market value of the site. Thus, the 25 percent land write-down proposal was deemed to have no negative financial implications for the City because of the land lease arrangement. Under such conditions, only 50 percent City Council approval was required. The write-down proposal passed.

There are several entrances and exits to the Four Sisters Housing Co-operative. This doorway to Powell Street from the courtyard is designed to enable open lines of sight and a strong sense of security.

Because of earlier delays, the $75,000 loan from the Proposal Development Fund ran out. DERA approached the Vancouver City Savings Credit Union for bridge financing and received a $65,000 unsecured loan that proved critical to the success of the project. The total cost of the project was approximately $6 million.

As a co-operative, members of Four Sisters are required to make a refundable equity contribution to the Co-op. In most co-ops in B.C., this amount usually ranges from $1,000 to $2,500. At Four Sisters, the share purchase is set at a sum equivalent to half a month's housing charge. For those in subsidized units, the provincial social assistance program provides this amount as if it were a damage deposit. This unique arrangement means that the co-op share purchase is not an obstacle for low income members.

Management and Operation. Like all co-operatives, an elected Board of Directors manages Four Sisters. According to staff, the nature of the member selection process ensures a good Board. The Board has established a number of committees to deal with membership, finance, pets, maintenance, grievances, landscaping, architectural review and security. DERA committees which include Four Sisters members are the Crab Park Committee and the CP Rail Committee. The Board and the committees have formulated a number of policies regarding admission, pets and other issues affecting day-to-day operations.

The Four Sisters Co-op itself has no staff and hires DERA to provide management services. In consultation with the Co-op Board, DERA hires a full-time coordinator and maintenance person. The coordinator acts as a liaison with the Board and committees, performs clerical duties, and works with members on a daily basis in sorting out problems and issues as they arise. The latter function is the most important aspect of the job according to the coordinator. DERA staff salaries are equivalent to unionized salaries. DERA has a policy not to hire co-op members in order to avoid problems with internal co-op politics and to allow staff to separate their home and work environment. Volunteer labour is responsible for the remaining work.

Housing charges (the co-operative equivalent of rent) are set at the shelter component of welfare less average utility costs, at 25 percent of income, or at the lower end of the market rent scale as determined by CMHC. Four Sisters aims to have between 50 percent and 75 percent of its units occupied by very low income members receiving rent supplements. It has not succeeded in achieving these levels to date. The proportion of households receiving a rent supplement subsidy was 43 percent as of August 1989. Market charges are already low and typically the amount of supplement subsidy granted per unit is low. The Co-op has recently reduced the proportion of income paid for rent to 25 percent from 30 percent in order to increase the amount of subsidy per unit. Thus, while the Co-op has not met its target, it is aware of the problem and is working to correct it. Furthermore, the subsidy rate is high compared to other co-ops. Rents range from a low of $242 per month for a bachelor unit to a high of $593 per month for a three bedroom apartment (as of August 1989).

Problems/Issues. One of the major difficulties identified by Co-op staff is the size of the co-operative. Because it is relatively large, day-to-day operation is complex, and board and staff capabilities are stretched to their limits. Some have suggested that Four Sisters could have been run as three separate co-ops. In addition, the security of tenure offered by the co-op to its members can and does pose a problem for the Board in removing problem members. The Co-op has undertaken several expensive court cases in the past. Security has been a continuing problem. Recently, the Co-op acquired walkie talkies to aid in surveillance and now believes that the situation is under control. Adequate maintenance of common areas and units is another difficult issue. Finally, the initial "close out" of construction and other capital costs took an extremely long time and restricted the Co-op until recently from making several large purchases.

5.2 Tellier Tower, Independent Housing, DERA

At Tellier Tower, DERA's primary goal is to provide affordable, adequate and secure accommodation for former residents of Downtown Eastside single room occupancy hotels. Primarily men, these older single people over 45 years of age are capable of independent living. As a seniors' housing project while the normal BCHMC and DERA eligibility criteria generally apply for admission to Tellier Tower, some accommodation has been made owing to differences in the health status of Downtown Eastside residents. For example, prospective tenants must be over age 45 rather than the usual 55 years of age to qualify for admittance as a senior. A broader definition of disabled also means that tenants do not have to actually receive a disability pension to be considered.

The Facility. Tellier Tower, DERA's third housing project, opened in May 1988. Formerly known as the Holden Building, it was built in 1909. It housed City Hall from 1929 to 1936 and later became an office building. Tellier Tower is located opposite the DERA office on East Hastings Street. DERA named the project after the late Gerry Tellier, a former Downtown Eastside resident and unemployment activist during the 1920s and 1930s, who in 1935 acted as one of the organizers of the "On to Ottawa Trek."

Tellier Tower	
Category	Independent Housing
Target Group	Low Income Singles Over Age 45
Opened Date	1988
Address	16 East Hastings Street
No. of Units	90
No. of Residents	96
Rent Supplement	100% of units
Unit Types	63 bachelor, 27 one bedroom
Management	DERA Housing Society
Building Type	Rehabilitated Heritage Building
Funding Program	Federal/Provincial Non-Profit Program
Architect	Davidson/Yuen Partners
Project Cost	$4,730,00 (52,500/unit)

Tellier Tower is a 10-storey building with residential suites on nine floors. The main floor and basement consist of common areas and storage. The building has a library, a communal kitchen and eating area, a TV and activity room, a lounge, and a laundry room with four washers and dryers on the main floor. The entrance area and main floor are designed to resemble a residential hotel lobby with a lounge area facing the street. Storage lockers and space for a woodworking shop are located in the basement.

Residents. The average age of Tellier residents is 62 years. Most are between the ages of 50 and 66 years. They would typically be classified as the elderly or near elderly. The oldest resident is 85 years old. The majority of residents originally came from the Downtown Eastside. While there are some couples, residents are mostly single persons, and 85 percent are males. At present, close to 20 percent speak Cantonese.

The comprehensive nature of the Tellier tenant screening process is the reason for the project's stable population. The DERA waiting list is screened for eligibility and short-listed before personal interviews are carried out. In the selection of the original tenants for Tellier Tower, DERA invited 800 people to an orientation meeting, prepared a short list of 150, and accepted 90 people after interviews that included an attitude survey. According to staff, Tellier Tower has experienced no evictions since it opened and only 10 vacancies, some due to the death of older tenants. Residents sign a lease agreement that stipulates the rules and regulations of the tenancy.

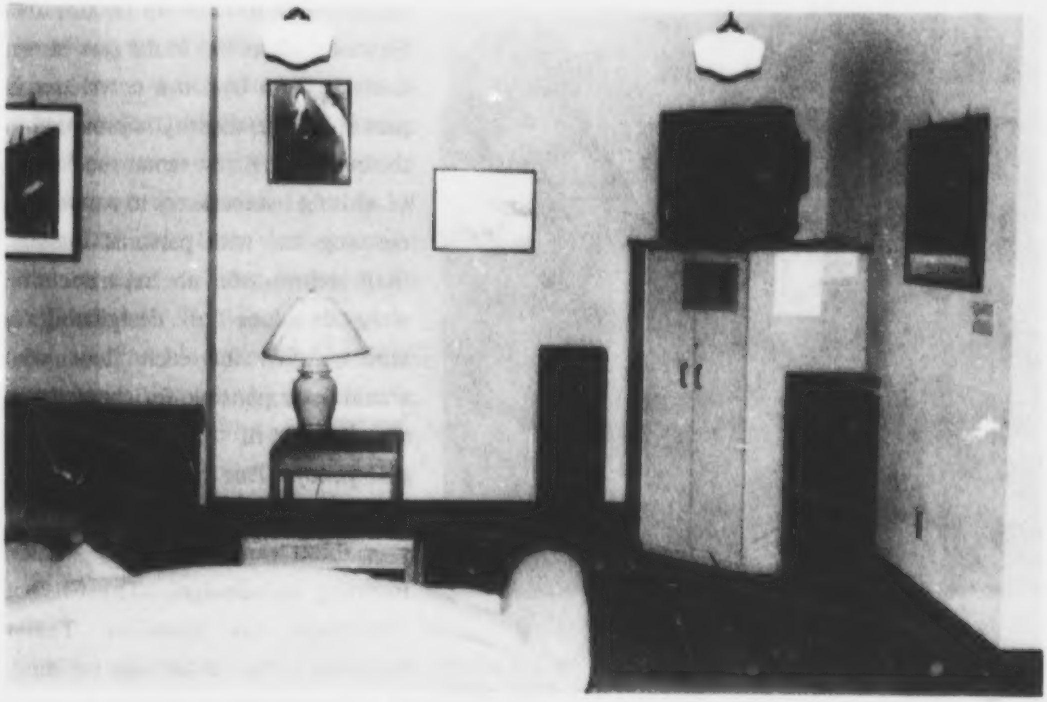
The Units. The 90 residential units are designed primarily for singles, but some one bedroom suites accommodate couples. Units range in size

Tellier Tower at 16 East Hastings Street is across the street from DERA's offices. This "Class B" Heritage Building has received numerous architectural awards for the quality of the restoration.

modate couples. Units range in size from 380 sq. ft. for a bachelor unit to 545 sq. ft. for a one bedroom unit.

Tellier Tower

Unit Types	No. of Units	% of Total	Avg. Size	Avg. Rent (as of date)
Bachelor	54	60%	380 sq.ft.	$104
Disabled Bachelor	9	10%	403	$165
One Bedroom	27	30%	500	$165



The television room of Tellier Tower is well looked after by residents and staff. It is adjacent to a large open area suitale for meetings and social gatherings.

The bathrooms and kitchens of the units for the disabled have been adapted to accommodate a wheelchair. The kitchens are equipped with a separate oven and countertop range, pull-out cutting boards, low counters for wheelchair use, and a large accessible pantry. Each unit has a built-in dining table of wheelchair height. The bathrooms are large enough for wheelchair radius and have enlarged doors with gullwing handles. In addition, two of the suites have wheel-in showers.

Tellier Tower's entrance area includes a library alcove which enables residents to sit, read and watch the action on Hastings Street. The popular use of this design feature also adds another degree of safety and security to the overall operation of the project.

Support Services. Support services in Tellier Tower consist mainly of the services of a coordinator, some resident sponsored events, and security services. In addition, a small store offers basic supplies for purchase at cost. It was established as an experiment to test the idea of a co-op food store. DERA is presently organizing a food co-op on Cordova Street for all seniors in the Downtown Eastside. An in-house newsletter is published, and security is provided in the building. A few tenants make use of visiting homemakers to assist with cleaning and with personal matters. Staff and residents are experimenting with the idea of designating a representative for each floor who would be responsible for contacting a coordinator in the event of an emergency. This system is operating on several floors.

Planning and Design. The City of Vancouver has classified Tellier Tower as a Class B heritage building. From the outset, the DERA Housing Society committed itself to maintaining and to restoring as much of the old building as possible. When renovated for housing, it was virtually rebuilt on the inside. The facade and other heritage features like interior marble floors and staircases were restored using photos of the building's original interior and exterior. The two lower levels had been renovated in 1970. Removal of wood veneer in the lobby revealed a marble entrance and stairways. In February 1989, Architects Davidson/Yuen Partners won a Heritage Award for the quality of restoration from the City of Vancouver.

Financing. Tellier Tower received funding through the Federal/Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program. Total capital cost of the Tellier Tower retrofit was $4,729,500 or an average of $52,550 per unit. The land under a provincial land lease made up $1,000,000 of this total, and the remaining $3,729,500 is a mortgage loan insured by CMHC. The federal government (CMHC) pays 67 percent and the Province (BCHMC) pays 33 percent of the annual subsidy of $550,800. No City write-down of land assisted in the financing of Tellier Tower. Under the terms of the program, the Province purchased the land for DERA and leases it to the Housing Society for 75 percent of the value. Tellier Tower is owned by BCHMC and the Province of B.C. DERA Housing Society holds a 60 year lease on the property.

DERA developed the site in conjunction with TriWest Developments Ltd. The developer tied up the Tellier site because, unlike the federal

This 1936 photograph of Tellier Tower, than known as the HOlden Building, was taken at the end of its 1929 to 1936 stint as Vancouver's City Hall. The decorations mark the Golden Jubilee. Source: Vancouver City Archives co-op and non-profit programs, the Federal/Provincial Non-Profit program does not provide start-up funds. DERA then submitted an application to BCHMC, the administrator of the Federal/ Provincial Non-Profit program, for a unit allocation. An agreement with TriWest was signed to develop the building.

Management and Operation. The Board of Directors of DERA Housing Society manages Tellier Tower. However, for day-to-day matters, three coordinators employed by DERA are responsible for operation of the building. One of the coordin-ators estimates that approximately half of his time is spent dealing with tenants disputes, visiting tenants in hospital, calling doctors, and dealing with security matters. The remainder of his time is spent on maintenance related duties. DERA intends to provide a staff person in the building 24 hours a day. With the current level of funding, DERA is only able to do this near welfare day, when difficulties with drinking and violence characterize the Downtown Eastside. DERA estimates that 4.75 full-time equivalent positions are needed to provide 24 hour staff coverage accounting for statutory holidays and vacations.

An elected, seven member tenants committee meets once every month to discuss a range of issues and establish house rules. Tenants are also involved in the tenant selection process.

Under the terms of the Non-Profit Program, 100 percent of the units must be targeted to "core needy" as defined by BCHMC. Residents pay no more than 30 percent of their income on rent. For those on welfare, rent is approximately $104.00 per month, and for those on the disability welfare allowance, it is about $165 per month as of August 1989. BCHMC has set the maximum allowable household income at $17,500 per year.

Problems/Issues. The lack of adequate staff is a concern. Staff felt that the Downtown Eastside security issues, particularly on and near "welfare day" warrant a high level of staffing. Other concerns such as multi-cultural issues, health matters, and difficulties posed by those with English as a second language mean staff coordinators are needed on a 24-hour basis.

Staff expressed uneasiness about the potential difficulty of aging tenants who require more and more support to function on a daily basis. Although Tellier is independent living accommodation, some tenants may not wish to leave when their condition worsens.

5.3 Bill Hennessy Place, Supportive Housing, First United Church

The goal of the First United Church Housing Society in building its early projects, including Bill Hennessy Place, was to improve the condition of Vancouver's inner city poor through the provision of secure, adequate, affordable housing. In essence, the Society wanted it wished to provide a "home" and not just shelter. In conjunction with the other services offered by the Mission, the housing would enable tenants to improve their lives. Housing Society Board members aimed to build socially mixed housing in the Downtown Eastside "like they have on the west side." An early First United Church housing document emphasized that the Society wanted to develop housing for families with children as well as for seniors and disabled individuals, the traditional Downtown Eastside residents.

Bill Hennessy Place	
Category	Supportive Housing
Target Group	Social Mix, "Hard to House"
Opened Date	1984
Address	370 Jackson Street
No. of Units	70
No. of Residents	115
Rent Supplement	25%
Unit Types	1 & 2 Bedroom Self-Contained
Management	First United Church Housing Society Board and McKenzie Management
Building Type	New High Rise, 7 stories
Funding Program	Federal Non-Profit Housing Program
Architect	Ron Yuen and Joe Wai Partners
Project Cost	$4,700,000 ($69,100/unit)

The Facility. Bill Hennessy Place, opened in 1984, is the first housing project built by the First United Church Housing Society. It is a 7-story, 70-unit apartment building located on Jackson Street at Hastings, in the heart of the Downtown Eastside. It is named after a Downtown Eastside community worker.

Bill Hennessy Place has a common room that is now rented to a seniors club called the "Second Mile Society." Hennessy Place and Jenny Pentland Place (another First United Church housing project located across the street) share several facilities and services. For example, exercise equipment in Jenny Pentland Place is available for use by Hennessy Place residents. Commercial space on the first floor of Bill Hennessy Place is rented to a chiropractor and to a grocery store to help make the project financially viable. Although there are no outdoor play facilities for children, it is conveniently located near Oppenheimer Park.

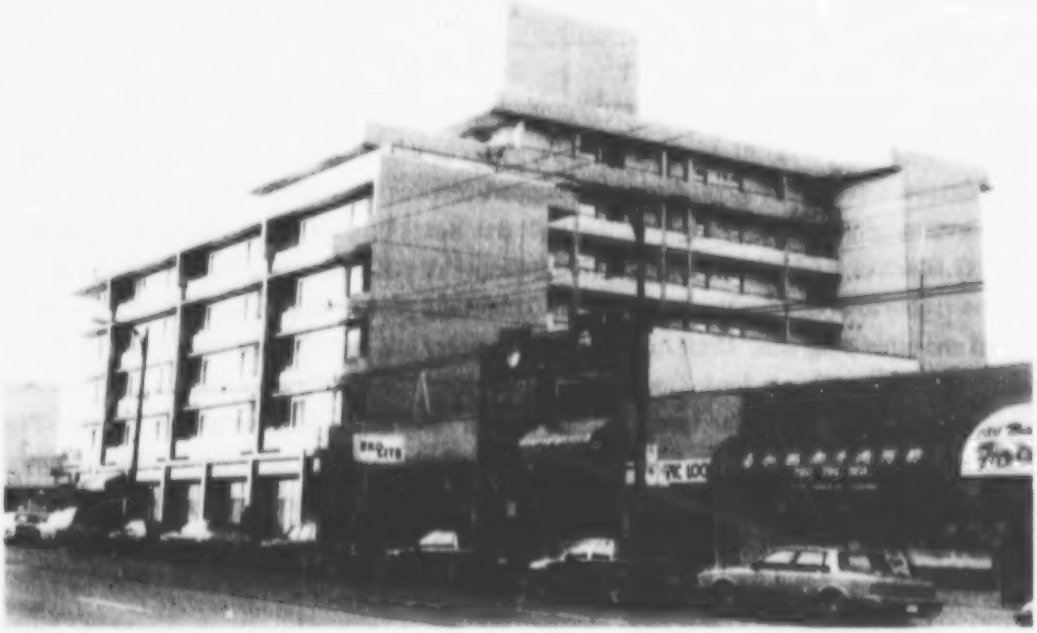
The Residents. About 115 residents live at Bill Hennessy Place including single people and families with children. Approximately 72 percent of the residents are over the age of 45 and about 50 children are under the age of 19 years. In 1988 the ethnic breakdown of the residents was estimated to be 44 percent Asian and 40 percent Caucasian. The remainder are members of other ethnic groups. Some tenants formerly occupied residential hotels and rooming houses, while others represent higher income groups and can afford the low end of market rents. This mix of tenants appears to meet the organization's stated objectives of providing housing for a range of family types and income groups.

While First United Church Housing Society generally aims to accommodate independent individuals and families at Bill Hennessy Place, it finds that it must occasionally be flexible in serving a somewhat harder-to-house clientele. Consequently, if the selection committee is assured

The 70 unit Bill Hennessy Place at 370 Jackson Street is on a corner at Hastings Street.

by social workers or others that a certain alcoholic or schizophrenic individual will not disturb others living in the building, and that community support services will be available should the need arise, the Society will agree to accommodate that individual on a trial basis. Although these harder-to-house tenants are relatively few in number, Bill Hennessy Place does have a different tenant mix than, for example, DERA's two independent projects, and they require more supervision.

In the last few years, the tenant selection process for First United Church housing units has evolved considerably. Originally the resident manager chose tenants. However, concerns were raised about the manager's selection process. Consequently, the Board transferred the responsibility to a team consisting of a Board member and a community worker, with some help from a volunteer. In spring 1989, the Society formed a tenant selection committee for Hennessy Place and Pentland Place. Membership on the committee consists of a community worker, a volunteer, two tenants, a representative from the management company, and the resident manager.



Bill Hennessy Place has underground parking, 5,000 sq.ft. of ground retail space, 3,000 sq.ft. of community space and landscaped roof-decks and a courtyard at ground level.

The committee uses a loose point system based on length of residence in the Downtown Eastside, income level, rent as percentage of income, health, and present housing conditions. People on the First United Church waiting list are contacted on a first come, first serve basis. The Committee holds interviews and makes its decision. The tenant selection system has not been in place long enough to assess its efficiency.

The Units. Due to the mix of families and singles in Bill Hennessy Place, the type of residential units are more evenly split than is the case in many other projects. There are a total of 70 units in the building.

Bill Hennessy Place

Unit Types	No. of Units	% of Total	Avg. Size	Avg. Rent (Aug.'89)
Bachelor	24	34	334 sq.ft.	$285
One Bedroom	29	42	500	$435
Two Bedroom	17	24	581	$540

Support Services. Provision of adequate support services to residents of Bill Hennessy Place represents a continuing challenge for the staff and Board of the First United Church Housing Society. Lack of funding to increase staffing is the primary difficulty. Over the years, the Society has been able to obtain funding from various federal and provincial programs to offer a range of social and other programs. Until August 1989, Hennessy and Pentland residents could participate in a health action project funded by Health and Welfare Canada. It organized outings, exercise and other activities for seniors over 45 years of age. In addition to these special services, First United Church community workers are available to residents for advocacy work and other services, although on a limited basis due to other commitments. The residents themselves have organized a door check system for those who wish to participate. Each day, two volunteers check to ensure the safety and well-being of the tenants.

Planning and Design. The Board's original idea for their first social housing project was to use the existing site of the Church at Hastings and Gore Streets. The proposal suggested that the First

United Church building be razed and another structure built to combine new church facilities with social housing. However, after much work, the project was not feasible. The Board searched for an alternative site and selected the present location on Jackson Street.

The Society made a conscious decision to use the non-profit structure for its housing project rather than the co-operative model. This decision emerged from the perception that the planning and design process is complex, and consequently no effort was made to include prospective tenants in the planning or design stages of the process. Instead, the coordinator, the architects, the First United Church Housing Society Board, and some interested members of the congregation made the decisions.

One of the oversights of the needs assessment stage of the planning process was that staff did not originally plan for Hennessy to provide housing for the Asian community. The Asian community was not visible to frontline staff at the time and the Chinese community tended to use its own support system for its social needs. Staff mistakenly assumed that no housing need existed among the Chinese community. However, almost half of the residents in the Hennessy Place are Asian. This is an issue because some difficulties with discrimination and charges of racism have occurred in the past.

The design of Bill Hennessy Place was unique because it was the first to introduce self-contained units to the Downtown Eastside. Previous housing was built under the assumption that people wanted accommodation similar to the sleeping rooms and shared bathroom facilities available in hotels and lodging houses. Hennessy Place was designed with full kitchens and bathrooms in each suite "like the west side." Construction of Hennessy Place started in May 1983. The first tenants moved in July 1984, which marked the centenary of the First United Church in the Downtown Eastside.

Financing. Bill Hennessy Place was built under CMHC's Non-Profit Housing Program which provides mortgage insurance on private loans for 100 percent of the cost of social housing projects. Mortgage payments are made through a combination of monthly rents and an annual CMHC subsidy. In addition, the United Church made a $50,000 line of credit available to the Housing Society at the outset.

The total cost of Bill Hennessy Place was approximately $4.7 million, including land, building construction and furniture and fixtures. The Society purchased the vacant lot located on the corner of Jackson and East Hastings Streets. CMHC approved the transfer of the units to this original proposed site from the site of the church at Hastings and Gore. The First United Church approached the City of Vancouver seeking assistance with the land purchase, and the City agreed to a 25 percent write down of the cost of the land for forty years.

Management and Operation. Management of Bill Hennessy Place is the responsibility of the Board of Directors of the Housing Society. The CMHC Non-Profit Program does not allow tenants to sit on the Board. However, according to an early First United Church document, the original intention of the Board in regard to long-term management of the project was that tenants would assume responsibility for operation and maintenance, while the Society would remain in charge of financial affairs.

In August 1989 the Board contracted with MacKenzie Management Ltd. to take over management of its three housing projects, including Bill Hennessy Place. The Board took this action because it found it could not keep up with day-to-day requirements of managing the three buildings. The company now has responsibility for building maintenance, repair and bookkeeping. The Board believes that the cost of the management company is reasonable. Moreover, this arrangement frees the overworked half-time manager/caretaker from some of his responsibilities and can spend more time on tenant-related concerns.

Staff at Bill Hennessy Place consists of a half-time caretaker and half-time manager/caretaker. Both employees are shared with Jenny Pentland Place across the street. According to members of the Board and the staff interviewed for this study, the level of staffing is inadequate to provide suitable physical maintenance of the building and to deal with tenant issues as they arise. In particular, security has been an ongoing concern of the tenants. Volunteer security guards and gardeners also work at Bill Hennessy Place. The Board's policy is to hire staff from among the residents if possible. It has succeeded in all but one building, in which the manager was hired from elsewhere.

According to a First United Church community worker, few tenants participate in the management or the operation of Bill Hennessy Place partly due to the stipulations of the non-profit program, and partly because of a lack of interest. In general, community workers encourage tenants to take a more active role in building affairs. The tenants, with assistance from community workers, have initiated a monthly newsletter in English and Cantonese called *The Tenants Voice*. Joint Bill Hennessy Place and Jenny Pentland Place tenants' meetings are held on a monthly basis. Approximately five to ten people show up for tenants' meetings on the average, but if the subject of rent is on the agenda, turnout is larger. Tenants participate in several committees including the tenant committee and the entertainment committee.

Some tenants pay "low end of market" rents, while others who receive a rent supplement, pay no more than 25 percent of their income toward rent. In 1989, non-subsidized, low end of market rents in Bill Hennessy Place were $285 for a bachelor unit, $435 for a one-bedroom and $540 for a two-bedroom unit. CMHC raises the low end of market rent levels rents on an annual basis. As of September 1989, rents slightly exceeded the shelter component of Ministry of Social Services and Housing welfare rates. Tenants objected to the increase and sent a petition to CMHC requesting that it roll back rents to welfare rates. CMHC responded that it is unable to reduce rents, and it suggested that the Society should subsidize rents through its own fund-raising efforts.

Today, the Board is concerned that the number of rent supplement units in Bill Hennessy Place is declining. At present, only 16 out of 70 units, or 25 percent, are subsidized. The remainder must pay low end of market (LEM) rents set by CMHC or the shelter component of welfare.

Problems/Issues

The First United Church Board now feels that its original aims for their housing projects were well intended, but naive. While the staff and Board are coping as best they can, existing financial and human resources are inadequate to meet the needs of all three housing projects. Several issues, including maintenance and insufficient security measures, continue to challenge the Board and staff. A larger question concerns how will the First United Church Housing Society and Mission deal with harder to house tenants.

5.4 Ledingham Place, Supportive Housing, First United Church

Ledingham Place is a 100 percent wheelchair accessible adaptable housing project. The idea for adaptable units originated from a study sponsored by the City of Vancouver and CMHC that identified problems with existing wheelchair modified suites in the city. The *Survey of Wheelchair-Modified Units in Vancouver Non-Market Housing Projects* (Sangha, nd) found that many private non-profit groups had difficulty matching wheelchair disabled tenants with their wheelchair modified units and that, as a result, able bodied persons were occupying these units.

The First United Church decided that its goal of providing economical living units could be combined with the City's goal of building units adaptable to a range of disabilities. Adaptable units are meant for people with temporary, permanent, or degenerative diseases. In fact, according to some observers, all new units in an aging society like ours should be adaptable because the costs of modifying conventional suites for wheelchair accessibility are high. Ledingham was designed as a demonstration project to test the utility of adaptable units. Its success has never been evaluated.

Ledingham Place	
Category	Supportive Housing
Target Group	All Household Types
Opened Date	1988
Address	2425 Brunswick Avenue
No. of Units	33
No. of Residents	71
Rent Supplement	100%
Unit Types	1, 2 & 3 Bedroom Self-Contained
Management	First United Church Housing Society Board and McKenzie Management Ltd.
Building Type	New Construction and Heritage Rehabilitation
Funding Program	Federal/Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program
Architect	Edward de Grey Architects
Project Cost	$2,500,000 ($75,800/unit)

The Facility. Ledingham Place, which is located in the Mount Pleasant district of Vancouver, opened in March 1988. Mount Pleasant is a lower income neighbourhood bordering the Downtown Eastside. It is considered an identifiable neighbourhood separate from the Downtown Eastside but adjacent to it. Ledingham Place draws its residents from the central area of the city, and a number of the residents originally came from the Downtown Eastside. The complex is close to shopping, major transportation routes and a local park.

Ledingham Place is a low rise building consisting of a rehabilitated single family heritage house with an attached three storey wood frame apartment block. Facilities in Ledingham Place include a common area and common room with kitchen facilities, a laundry, an underground parking lot, an elevator, and a courtyard with gazebo.

The Residents. In August 1989, 71 residents, including 12 single mothers, 6 families, 6 couples and 6 seniors, lived in Ledingham Place. According to the building manager, 80 percent of the tenants were Mount Pleasant residents before moving into the project. However, some people moved to Ledingham from other First United Church housing projects in the Downtown Eastside. They wished to leave the Downtown Eastside area. Therefore, while Ledingham is not part of the case study neighbourhood, some of its residents are from this area and the project addresses the needs of people who live in the Downtown Eastside.

A large crowd gathered for the official opening of Ledingham Place in 1988. The project is located at 2425 Brunswick Street.

None of the residents living in Ledingham Place were wheelchair disabled in August 1989, although some tenants did have other disabilities. Ironically, the First United Church project is faced with the same difficulties in matching units with wheelchair disabled tenants as those buildings surveyed in the Vancouver study. Still, adaptable units are designed to be suitable for both able bodied and disabled tenants.

The Society has experienced difficulty finding disabled tenants for Ledingham Place although they are given priority. Unlike a housing co-operative, the government regulations only allow the society one month to find a replacement once notice is given. If the selected tenant also has to give one month's notice to a landlord, the unit may remain vacant for some time. The Society cannot afford to wait for the most appropriate person or family, but must accept applicants who are available on short notice. This often includes people without existing accommodation or tenants living in residential hotels without the same notice requirements. Consequently, the tenants are often from a harder-to-house population.

One component of Ledingham Place is a large renovated house, while the other is a newly constructed building. Both components are functionally linked.

The Units. The units in this demonstration project are suitable for a range of family types and levels of physical ability. The renovated heritage house contains three units and the new section contains thirty for a total of 33.

Adaptable units are suites in which the kitchen can be adjusted for wheelchair use. Kitchen counters are raised and lowered easily, and other modifications are possible. All units may be utilized with both the left and right hand. Thus, the tenant does not have to move when faced with a temporary or permanent physical disability. These special design features allowing units to be modified for use by disabled tenants were unique in the province at the time. The project received a B.C. Housing Award for Technical Innovation. It is under consideration for another award fcr construction innovation.

Ledingham Place

Unit Types	No. of Units	% of Total	Avg. Size	Avg. Rent (Aug. '89)
One Bedroom	12	36	645 sq.ft.	$200
Two Bedroom	15	45	882	$350
Three Bedroom	6	18	1087	$500

Support Services. Because Ledingham Place is removed from the immediate mission area of First United Church, tenants do not utilize other services offered by the Church as frequently as residents of other Housing Society projects. No formal services are available within the housing complex itself, although the Church may offer a parenting program sometime in the future. One of the strengths of Ledingham Place is the building manager's personal support of tenants due to the relatively small size of the project and to the manager's own personality. Ledingham Place's moderate is a size makes personal contact and interaction possible.

Planning and Design. The City of Vancouver approached First United Church to oversee a project for adaptable housing for the disabled. Eight possible sites were selected by Social Planning staff including the West End, Mount Pleasant and Grandview areas of Vancouver. First United Church selected the Mount Pleasant site, which consisted of three as yet undesignated heritage houses.

Early in the planning process, one of the houses burned down. Owing to cost considerations, the First United Church design proposed to keep only one of the two remaining heritage houses, Ledingham Place. This proposal encountered opposition from the community primarily because it wanted to protect the heritage values of both houses. The community wanted to create a heritage precinct in the block. However, recognizing the trade-off between social housing and heritage preservation, City Council approved the Church's proposal. Some dissatisfaction remains within the community because Ledingham Place did not preserve both of the remaining houses.

Financing. The Federal/Provincial Non-Profit Housing Program provided funding for Ledingham Place. Total costs to June 1988 amounted to almost $2.5 million with land accounting for $626,250 of the total and construction accounting for $1,868,700. The City purchased the site for $800,000 and wrote down the cost of the land by approximately 20 percent, to $626,250. The City also contributed $100,000 to save and move old Ledingham house. The First United Church Housing Society leases the land from the City of Vancouver.

Building adaptable units is more expensive than building regular units because more space is required and because equipment costs for stoves and other appliances are higher. However, the units at Ledingham were built within the federal government's allowable maximum unit price, which includes a disabled bonus of up to 12 percent.

The facade and streetscape of Ledingham Place is designed to blend into the neighbourhood where many three and four storey apartments are common.

Management and Operation. As with Bill Hennessy Place, the Housing Society recently delegated authority for management of Ledingham Place to MacKenzie Management Ltd. The three-quarter time resident manager reports to the management company which in turn reports to the Board of Directors. In addition, one Board member is assigned overall responsibility for the building. Residents participate very little in management, although tenants meetings are held occasionally.

The funding program requires that all tenants living in Ledingham Place must meet the "core housing need" income limits for their household size. All units, therefore, receive rent supplement subsidies. Rents are set at a maximum of 30 percent of household income or approximately $100.00 for people on welfare (in 1989).

Problems/Issues. The absence of disabled tenants may be seen as a problem for Ledingham Place. However, as it is designed for adaptability, the units are suitable for any tenant. The project should be evaluated after several years have passed.

Security is a problem for Ledingham as it is for most of the other case study housing projects. According to residents and staff, the problem at Ledingham is attributable to the design of the building and to the neighbourhood. People may enter the apartments through the balcony windows. Tenants thus tend to leave the windows closed even during hot summertime conditions.

Ledingham also experienced an initial period of instability, due to several unsuitable tenants. Staff evicted these problem tenants and now the situation appears to have improved.

5.5 Cecilia House, Supportive Housing, St. James Social Service Society

The goal of the St. James' Social Service Society in developing Cecilia House is to provide living accommodation for semi-independent "graduates" of other St. James' Social Service Society programs or members of the St. James' "family." Cecilia House is intended to provide accommodation for a minimum of one year for mental health patients capable of semi-independent living.

The Facility. Cecilia House consists of eight bachelor apartments situated on Powell Street directly above St. James' Social Service Society. The accommodation is close to all St. James' services and facilities. The building is accessible to the disabled, and the elevator is equipped for stretchers. A lounge with TV is available for tenants' use, although it is not used very often as the tenants have their own self-contained suite. Offices and other spaces for use by the Society are located on the ground floor. Saint James' laundry is located on the ground floor. It services St. James' needs, and it has contracts with other agencies in the Downtown Eastside. The laundry is self-supporting.

Cecilia House	
Category	Supportive Housing
Target Group	Semi-Independent Ex-Psychiatric Patients
Opened Date	1987
Address	315 Powell Street
No. of Units	8
No. of Residents	9
Rent Supplement	100%
Unit Types	Self-Contained Bachelor
Management	Saint James' Social Services Society Board and Executive Team
Building Type	New Low Rise Apartment
Funding Program	CMHC Non-Profit Housing Program and B.C. Rental Assistance Program
Architect	Davidson/Yuen Partners
Project Cost	$400,000 ($50,000/unit)

The Residents. Cecilia House has nine residents presently consisting of seven single people and one couple. The intent is to accommodate people of both sexes. The tenant mix is planned to ensure that residents are compatible and that longer term tenants can help new persons become familiar with Cecilia House. According to the former Executive Director of St. James',

> *We know 90 percent of our tenants and so we can plan a stable mix on each floor. With our new building, we have a clear understanding of who the building is for. We will try to create a secure mix which will encourage mutual support and help.* (Robert White, interview, Sept. 21, 1989)

The Residents' Council is involved with tenant selection in a small way as it is permitted to vote on prospective residents, with final decisions reserved for management.

The Units. All eight units are self-contained, furnished bachelor suites. Furnishings are important as most of the tenants are graduates from Victory House or nearby hotels and have no furniture or other household equipment of their own.

Cecilia House is built above the busy offices of St. James' Social Service Society.

Support Services. As semi-independent living accommodation, Cecilia House operates without full-time, in-house staff. Rather, two members of the Saint James' staff share responsibility for liaison with the tenants. The Coordinator of Victory House is responsible for overseeing Cecilia House.

Cecilia House operates within the supportive environment of other St. James' services. Residents have access to these services as needed and a lifeskills worker is also available when necessary. Residents are entitled to meals at Victory House on Sundays for a small charge. Otherwise, they are responsible for their own meals, which they prepare in their own units.

Cecilia House is located in the heart of the "Japan Town" section of the Downtown Eastside. This is a popular area with a high level of street activity.

Planning and Design. Cecilia House is part of a two phase, staged development consisting of three separate facilities: Cecilia House; Santiago Lodge; and May's Place Community Home for the Terminally Ill. Cecilia House was built in 1986, and the other two have recently been completed. The first tenants moved into Santiago Lodge in January and the hospice is expected to open shortly. The project architect for Cecilia House was Davidson/Yuen Partners.

Financing. The total capital cost for the shelter component of Cecilia House was $392,000. Additional costs were incurred for construction of the commercial space. The units were funded by CMHC's Non-Profit Housing Program. The provincial government provided a grant for 25 percent of capital costs ($98,000) through the Provincial Rental Assistance Program, which is no longer in existence. It was once generally available to special needs housing projects. Cecilia House required this combination of funding because all units needed subsidization, and the CMHC program alone could not accomplish this. Rental income received from tenants supplies additional operating funds.

The St. James' Social Service Society uses a housing consultant to assist with planning the financial aspects of its housing projects. Cecilia House is located on City-owned land leased by the Society for a period of 41 years commencing January 1986. The purchase price of the shelter component of the land was $63,620. Although commercial space is attached to Cecilia House, the project receives no income from the adjacent offices and stores.

Cecilia House and the St. James' Social Service Society office is in close proximity to Vancouver's central business district. The truck in the photo is owned by St. James' and is used by their recycling business.

Management and Operation. The coordinator of Victory House, who is responsible to the Executive Director, supervises Cecilia House. Only a minimum of supervision is needed. In addition, a Residents' Council meets every month to discuss issues and interview potential tenants. Cecilia House hires the Society to provide janitorial and maintenance services. All tenants pay 30 percent of their income for rent.

Problems/Issues. Persons interviewed could identify no problems with Cecilia House. They regarded the residents as a stable group who are generally satisfied with their accommodation.

5.6 **Victory House,** Care Facility, St. James Social Service Society

The primary goal of St. James' Social Service Society is to provide services for its target group of hard-to-house clients, especially persons with psychiatric problems. About 15 years ago, the Society recognized that housing was a critical need for the hard-to-house, and it began using the Victory Hotel as a base for clients using its services. Victory House now supplies permanent, supportive and affordable accommodation for hard-to-house, mentally ill persons outside of hospital facilities.

The Facility. Victory House is a form of residential care facility that offers furnished housekeeping and sleeping rooms together with a range of other personal and health-related services. Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services (a non-profit society formed to administer the work of the B.C. Ministry of Health, Mental Health in the Lower Mainland) classifies Victory House as a "mental health boarding house." It is located in an old City building opposite Oppenheimer Park in the Downtown Eastside. Due to the age of building, it is not wheelchair accessible. It is a converted single occupancy residential hotel acquired for use by the Society for people under their care. Amenities include a large common area on the main floor consisting of a cafeteria and television room, a non-smoking residents lounge, and an upper lounge.

Victory House	
Category	Care Facility
Target Group	Ex-Psychiatric Patients
Opened Date	1976
Address	391 Powell Street
No. of Units	47
No. of Residents	47
Rent Supplement	100%
Unit Types	40 Sleeping Rooms and 7 Housekeeping Units
Management	Saint James' Social Society Board and Executive Team
Building Type	Converted Hotel
Funding Program	Rental Rehabilitation Assistance Program and Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services
Architect	Not Applicable. Renovation of existing hotel

Victory House has evolved over time to serve the changing needs of the Downtown Eastside. At first, the primary client group were hard-to-house alcoholics. As other organizations began to fill the needs of alcoholics in the area, Saint James' began to recognize the need for services for the mentally ill. As the needs of this group have grown, particularly with deinstitutionalization, Victory House has developed into a form of care facility. Within the last four years, Victory House has begun to receive operating funding from Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services in recognition of its expanding responsibilities. While early clients were categorized as personal care or intermediate care level one by Mental Health Services assessors, Victory House now serves clients classified as intermediate care levels two and three. These residents require higher levels of personal assistance and care.

The Residents. Residents of Victory House consist of mentally ill, ex-psychiatric patients. They are primarily those diagnosed as schizophrenics who require full-time support and care. They typically come from other care facilities or hospitals such as Riverview Psychiatric Hospital, or from nearby residential hotels. The average age of residents has traditionally been about 45 to 50 years old, although there is a recent trend towards younger residents in

Victory House, located at 391 Powell Street, is a converted residential hotel. This 47 unit project is on the same block as Cecelia House and is near Oppenheimer Park.

their 20s. They are mostly single people, although some are couples. Victory House is not properly set up for couples, and they must use separate rooms. While Victory House presently accommodates a hard-to-house clientele, staff see a growing trend towards more troubled patients who require housing and support services in the Downtown Eastside.

Victory House takes referrals from all over the Lower Mainland, but it gives priority to Vancouver residents. Staff maintain a waiting list. Residency is granted by need rather than on a first come, first serve basis in conjunction with Mental Health Services assessors.

The Units. The 47 units consist of 40 furnished sleeping rooms and 7 housekeeping units.

Support Services. Victory House operates with a unique philosophy quite different from that once employed by other residential facilities for the mentally ill. The approach is called "professional friendship." Rather than relying on the medical model and employing professional staff like psychiatric nurses and psychiatrists to treat patients, the program at Victory House uses social workers and counsellors or community workers to provide residents with reinforcement for positive behaviours. The approach is based on the "I'm OK, You're OK" method of counselling. The program at Victory House is well received among the mental health community, and it has served as a model for other facilities throughout North America. Staff have been invited to explain and to describe their methods to others in the field.

Victory House supplies residential personal care, full clinical and pharmaceutical support, counselling and a range of social and other activities for its residents. In addition, all the other services of the Society like the clothing bank are available to residents. A day program for graduates of Victory House offers social activities and exercise programs like monthly dances, bowling, picnics, and swimming. St. James' also operates a case management system through which it administers social assistance funds for clients incapable of handling money on their own. This service is offered to St. James' clients as well as to other residents of the Downtown Eastside.

Financing. The City of Vancouver purchased the Victory Hotel in 1977 on behalf of St. James' for $240,000 when health authorities threatened the hotel with closure. Shortly afterwards, the building was extensively renovated to bring it up to code. Both federal

Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) and provincial funds were used for the renovations. The Society acted as its own contractor using local labour. The City owned building is leased to the St. James' Social Service Society for $1 per year on a 25 year lease. The total cost of renovation was $55,000.

Operating funds come from rental income and, beginning in 1989, Vancouver Mental Health Services supplies a per diem rate of $15.64 per person. Victory House formerly received indirect financial assistance from Mental Health Services through the use of homemaking staff and other services.

Management and Operation. A Coordinator who also has responsibility for Cecilia House oversees day-to-day activities at Victory House. The House operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with full supervision for all residents.

The basement of Victory House contains the cafeteria and kitchen facilities of St. James' Social Service Society. This service is well used by area residents.

Victory House has a much larger staff than any of the other case study housing projects, due to the level and the type of care provided and the fact that there are programs to finance this level of care. The 22 staff members include full-time, part-time and casual employees, and represent 15 full-time equivalents. They are community workers, counsellors, personal care and lifeskills workers, security janitors, and two coordinators. A wide range of volunteers also assist in the day-to-day running of the House with many students on psychiatric nursing program practicums from Douglas College.

Rents amount to $275 per month, the shelter component of the Handicapped Persons Income Assistance in 1989. Victory House differs from other intermediate care facilities in the Downtown Eastside and elsewhere in that it charges residents only the shelter component of the Handicapped Persons Income Assistance, rather than the full amount of income assistance. The difference of about $100 per month is available for the resident's own use. This policy is intended to provide residents with a sense of freedom and dignity.

Problems/Issues. Employees of Victory House were recently unionized and affiliated with the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Wage negotiations are ongoing. Interviewees did not know how unionization would affect the day-to-day operation of Victory House.

Staff believe that some clients have passed beyond the expertise and the ability of Victory House. Consequently, they actively try to limit the clients whom they admit to those classified as intermediate care level I and II. Nevertheless, through their outreach programs, staff see individuals who fall between the cracks and remain unserved.

Part III

Findings and Recommendations

6. Findings

While the study did not set out to measure resident satisfaction, the case study projects do appear to be providing residents with good places to live. This section outlines major observations drawn from a review of the case study projects. These observations refer to features or attributes that researchers or interviewees identified as factors contributing to effective provision of housing services, or as problems or issues causing concern. The observations are intended to contribute to enhancing our understanding of the many factors that contribute to producing a housing project successful in meeting the needs of the homeless.

6.1 The Organizations

The philosophy and resources that sponsoring organizations bring to bear on the provision of housing exercise a strong influence on the nature and quality of the living environment they are able to furnish.

- The case studies highlight the relationship between the ongoing contribution of the community group and the ability of the housing to meet effectively the needs of residents and the community at large. This relationship is likely not as important for other target populations living in other urban areas or in suburban areas. Only those organizations that truly know the community and have established roots in the area can realistically supply the types of housing and support services that are required.

Sponsoring organizations must know the client group that they wish to serve and have a clear idea of their needs.

- This observation is related to the organization's philosophy or approach. Without a clear understanding of the client group and its respective needs and without the ability to provide for these needs, the sponsoring organizations will likely fail in creating a satisfactory living environment. DERA and to a slightly lesser extent, St. James have clearly defined their client's needs and the types of housing that they can manage. The First United Church Housing Society is willing to accommodate tenants who are harder to house than the clients they originally planned to serve. This has caused some discrepancies between the residents' needs and the availability of adequate resources.

The strength of the case study organizations is that they are multi-service organizations.

- They are able to recognize needs and, in many instances, provide necessary support services from within the organization itself or coordinate with other agencies that offer the needed service. For example, the relationship between the First United Church Mission and its Housing Society allows the latter to draw on the former's resources when the need arises. Organizations whose expertise lies only in planning, building and managing housing likely will not possess the necessary range of skills to successfully operate housing in the Downtown Eastside.

Securing adequate funding and staffing is a challenge for all third sector organizations, including the case study organizations.

- The amount and the quality of financial and human resources that sponsoring organizations bring to bear on the provision of housing influences the quality of housing services. While capital funds for housing are available from several programs (although the adequacy of the unit prices is questionable), funding for ongoing administration, support services and operation poses the biggest problem for most groups. All three case study organizations would benefit from enhanced funding, particularly for support services, but the need appears to be most critical at First United Church, owing to the target groups served and to the type of housing provided. First United Church serves a "harder-to-house" client group than does DERA, and yet it does not benefit from the "layering" of financial support obtained by St. James' from Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services.

Staff and volunteers are a key resource and they should receive adequate compensation, training and support.

- St. James' experienced difficulties with staff turnover until Victory House employees recently obtained union certification. Low wage rates were clearly a problem, and the facility almost closed because it was unable to meet union wages with available funding. This situation should never arise. Staff must be recognized and reimbursed for their work. In a similar vein, volunteer boards like the First United Church Board of Directors are taxed beyond their limits in supplying services that they cannot pay staff to provide. Both these examples illustrate the importance of and need for adequate organizational funding.

6.2 The Housing Projects

Smaller scale projects will more likely foster a "sense of community" and they are easier to manage.

- Several interviewees raised the issue of facility size, (particularly as it is related to management and operation), with respect to several case study projects. They felt that Four Sisters was too large and that its size might potentially outstrip the management capabilities of the Board and staff. First United Church staff and management had similar concerns about Bill Hennessy Place, where again a limited number of staff have difficulty in effectively managing the building. In both cases, the addition of support staff could accommodate the management and the operational demands of the appropriate buildings.

- Housing sponsors often have little choice regarding the ultimate size of a project as financial viability is the predominant consideration. Sites are difficult to find and each site has its own density restrictions. Interviewees questioned the wisdom of funding programs that set maximum units prices so low that they force sponsors to build large projects. The size issue may be less significant for independent housing projects than for supportive housing or residential care facilities, but again it is related to adequate staffing. Still, given the magnitude of the need for affordable, suitable accommodation, sponsors recognize the important role of larger projects. These concerns raise the issue of mixed projects, which a building consists of two or more types of residential units (i.e., a small number of units with appropriate support services for the hard-to-house and a larger number of units for independent living, both under separate management).

Multi-service organizations can take advantage of close proximity of their services and facilities to practise innovative coordination and sharing of physical and human resources.

- While a Downtown Eastside location virtually assures that residents live in close proximity to a range of services and amenities, the case study organizations have coordinated their services and facilities in an innovative and practical manner. For example, St. James' makes its services accessible to residents of all its facilities and projects by being located on one city block. Two of the First United Church projects are situated across the street from each other and enjoy communal areas and amenity spaces in common. DERA housing projects share maintenance staff and organize joint activities for residents of all DERA housing projects.

A range of different needs for housing and support services exists among the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

- Within the homeless and near homeless population is a range of different sub-groups with different needs for housing and support. Some are harder to house than others and require special consideration.

An essential element of project stability and resident satisfaction is an effective tenant selection process, particularly one in which tenants participate.

- Staff at both DERA and St. James' emphasized the importance of tenant selection for the successful operation of their projects. First United Church Housing Society recently altered its selection process to make it more effective. According to staff, the tenant (or member) selection process is the key to active residents and to good relations among residents in all DERA housing projects. The goal of the process is to ensure that the accommodation serves its intended target group, that residents are compatible, and that they participate in building affairs. As a key to good tenant relations, St. James' staff also cites the importance of sensitivity in mixing new, potentially unstable tenants with long-term, more stable residents able to assist in orientation. The concern with tenant selection is probably greater among the homeless or near homeless population residing in the Downtown Eastside or similar areas, than with other populations.

Community groups tend to skim the best of the available tenant pool as they are not able to shelter effectively the most "hard-to-house" clients with their present level of resources.

- Non-profit housing projects which do not have a source of funding for special support staff more easily accommodate people who can live independently than those who require more supervision or support due to various problems like alcoholism and violent behaviour. Faced with insufficient support staff, community-based groups who sponsor non-profit housing are not equipped to deal with special needs groups.

The case studies demonstrate that, in inner city areas such as the Downtown Eastside, support services of various kinds and degrees should be accessible and available to tenants in virtually all types of housing from independent living to residential facilities.

- The type of support required varies. Even in independent accommodation like Four Sisters and Tellier Towers, coordinators are present for a large part of the day, and they spend much of their time dealing with tenants' concerns and issues. With respect to support services other than a full-time coordinator, these organizations employ a model in which they themselves, rather than the housing project, make services available. Victory House is the only exception. As multi-service community organizations, DERA, First United Church and St. James' offer services and develop programs for people residing in their projects as well as those living elsewhere in the Downtown Eastside.

Effective support can be provided by having a full-time or 24- hour staff person (a coordinator) present in the building to take care of miscellaneous concerns.

- A feature common to all case study housing projects is the availability of a coordinator. While several buildings have coordinators, they are not present on a daily or a 24-hour basis as they are needed. Staff coordinators' activities range from resolving tenant disputes to translating for tenants with English as a second language to encouraging social interaction. While independent housing, by definition, would not appear to need even minimal levels of support, the nature of the area and its residents are such that services are critical for success. Funding for a housing coordinator should be tied to the operational budget of the housing project; it should not be brokered from other sources. The position of coordinator requires good inter-personal skills, knowledge of the people and the area, familiarity with building operation and maintenance, and, in some cases, bookkeeping skills. The personality and the skills of the coordinator are crucial in the provision of effective support in these projects.

Residents can provide their own informal or formal support network, as illustrated by Bill Hennessy Place, where residents have set up a door check program.

- DERA also strives to develop an environment that encourages residents to plan their own activities. In fact, DERA coordinators generally avoid taking responsibility for structuring events, with the view that the residents are capable of organizing themselves.

Resident participation in the planning and the design of social housing is viewed as desirable although not always possible.

- Consistent with its philosophy of promoting empowerment for area residents, DERA employs a "bottom-up" approach to planning and design, particularly in the early, conceptual stages. The co-op was designed in this way as its structure permits member participation at an early stage. DERA's base in the community and its active role in community life also assists in knowing what local residents want. The project architects selected by DERA have designed all their buildings, including the Four Sisters and Tellier Tower. DERA chose a firm that knows the area, the tenant group, and the funding programs.

Design should plan for current and future amenity space needs, especially play space for children in family projects and common lobby areas in single/senior projects.

- One of the design features of Four Sisters, for which it was granted an architectural award, is the amount and quality of amenity space provided. Architects were careful to take into account the nature of the prospective residents, especially families, and to provide suitable common areas and play space despite the difficulties imposed by the downtown area of a major city like Vancouver and the financial constraints dictated by the co-op program.

- Tellier Tower incorporates some of the common design elements of the area's traditional housing form, hotel living. Common space areas on the main floor of Tellier Tower are designed to resemble those typically found in the area's residential hotel lobbies. A small ground floor sitting area facing the street allows residents to "watch the world go by" and to browse through reading material available on the nearby bookshelves. Tenants who formerly resided in a hotel, seem to appreciate this design feature.

Security should be a prime design consideration in inner city areas.

- Virtually all of the projects identified security as an ongoing concern, which again may distinguish projects located in the Downtown Eastside from those in other areas. The need for security has serious implications for design, management and operation.

6.3 Financing

Existing housing funding programs do not meet the need for supportive housing.

- The case study housing projects are underfunded to the extent that, in some cases, they are hampered in their ability to provide necessary services. Underfunding will ultimately affect the quality of housing and the public capital investment in that housing. Full-time staffing is needed to provide coordinator services for each different type of housing, ranging from independent housing to care facilities, although in differing degrees. The need for additional staffing is particularly acute for supportive type housing projects. Sponsors of supportive housing are frustrated by a lack of operational funding for support services because gap exists between traditional shelter-only funding programs, like those offered by CMHC and BCMHC, and operating funding for residential facilities such as that provided by Greater Vancouver Mental Health Services.

A combination of public, private and third sector resources are necessary to bring together land, housing capital and services for affordable housing.

- Municipal government in-kind contributions to the financial viability of many of the case study housing projects should not be overlooked. Assistance was typically provided in negotiating land write-downs and in guiding the proposal through the municipal development approval process. Social housing in inner city locations like the Downtown Eastside is not viable without a contribution of this nature. While the private sector played a limited role in a couple of cases, this participation could be strengthened. For example, with the Four Sisters Co-op, a local credit union loan made when Proposal Development Funds ran out was a critical element in keeping the project alive. In addition, both First United Church and St. James' rely to some extent on private donations and Church assistance.

6.4 Management and Operation

Management expertise is critical to the effective provision of housing for homeless persons in areas like the Downtown Eastside.

- The importance of this aspect of social housing sponsorship should not be underestimated. In inner city areas, the sponsor must know the area and the people. The management approach must be developed by recognizing the unique characteristics of each client group and project. Housing should be linked to other services offered. Finally, adaptability or flexibility are necessary for a community group to meet shifting client needs.

Good management builds community relations and encourages residents of projects to become part of the larger community.

- All sponsors encourage or provide scope for tenant participation in some building affairs and resident selection. However, participation has not occurred in all projects. It represents a reasonable goal in all housing types and an attribute of success credited to projects by residents and interviewees alike. Tenant participation is built into the co-op structure at Four Sisters, Tellier Tower permits tenant participation in its selection committee, Bill Hennessy Place has a tenants' committee, as does Cecilia Place.

Volunteer services are an invaluable source of support in augmenting but not replacing staff expertise and experience.

- Housing projects cannot rely on volunteer labour provided by management through the Board of Directors to fill the funding gap. "Burnout" of Board members and staff due to the sheer volume of work was cited as a problem. Only an adequate number of staff positions can compensate for this.

7.0 Public Policy Recommendations

No person or family should be homeless in Canada today. The harsh reality is that the numbers are growing. With a social service network in place, people should not have to live on the streets or depend on others for unsuitable temporary shelter when they really need affordable permanent housing -- a home. Housing is a keystone of Canada's social welfare system but the system is not working for many Canadians.

This report presents profiles of six locally initiated housing projects aimed at assisting various sectors of the homeless or potentially homeless population. The projects are located in or near an area that was formerly called "Skid Road." The same area, now called the Downtown Eastside, is a recognized residential community of 10,000 people with several strong advocacy organizations. Actions by public and private agencies to increase new housing stock have added to the desperately needed supply of affordable housing. Yet the six community-initiated projects described here only scratch the surface of the need for permanent secure housing with the appropriate level of support services.

The information presented on the case study housing projects and their sponsoring organizations is intended to enhance an understanding of community-based housing initiatives for the inner city homeless who have a wide range of needs which go beyond shelter. This study has demonstrated that homeless persons in Vancouver's inner city area can be successfully accommodated in permanent affordable housing that is effective in meeting residents long-term needs. It has also raised questions about the provision of such housing from a public policy perspective for

> *a continuum of housing strategies linked to broad support programs must be based on public policies, integrated at appropriate scales and at appropriate levels of government; such a commitment will assist the homeless and at the same time address the causes of homelessness (Oberlander and Fallick, 1988:132).*

Public policy action and inaction can arguably contribute to the problem of homelessness and the homeless. Several authors contend that widespread homelessness is caused in part by an inadequate supply of low cost housing and that such housing shortages are a product of unsympathetic or uninformed public policies (Fallis and Murray, 1990; and Ontario Ministry of Housing, 1988). In analyzing the role of provincial and municipal policy in the context of Vancouver's homelessness situation, Gilbert (1989) found that government policies are implicated in the rising number of the homeless during the 1980's. The author attributes these policies to a reliance on free market philosophies that depend upon up-filtering processes to produce low cost housing.

This section outlines public policy recommendations that will contribute to enhancing the supply of suitable housing with particular emphasis on the homeless in inner city areas across Canada. To overcome the current affordable housing crisis and the corresponding tragedy of homelessness and to prevent future occurrences of such crises (because they will recur), a three part strategy is needed.

1. **The existing low cost housing stock must be maintained and new low cost housing must be produced.**

   Two sources of affordable housing, existing stock and newly constructed units, are available. Both must be the subject of housing policies. A study prepared for the City of Vancouver Planning Department (Hulchanski, 1989) that investigated options to maintain the supply of low cost housing and to prevent displacement of tenants in the Downtown Eastside recommended a five part strategy. It is summarized below as an example of the range and the type of initiatives needed to approach the issue of low cost housing in central city areas. These initiatives consist of:

   a) ***protecting the tenants*** through improved security of tenure regulations and tenant relocation assistance;

   b) ***protecting the stock*** through demolition, conversion and replacement regulations, zoning measures, strategic placement of stock, and preferential property tax treatment of residential hotels;

c) ***rehabilitating or adding new stock*** through federal, provincial and municipal rehabilitation programs, social housing unit allocation targets, municipal housing rehabilitation and supply programs and inclusionary zoning;

d) ***providing financing initiatives*** that include public/private partnerships, development/housing linkages, growth related housing funds, municipal housing plebiscites, and development charges and commercial levies; and

e) ***creating organizational initiatives*** such as a new housing department and a central area housing corporation.

While these initiatives are aimed at the central city in particular, efforts to maintain existing stock and to build new housing stock must occur on a city and region-wide basis to prevent down-filtering as people move from one neighbourhood to another in search of affordable housing.

2. Maintenance and creation of low cost housing must occur through the use of government subsidies and through partnerships with the private sector and the third sector.

The private market cannot economically produce low cost housing in core areas of major Canadian cities. If, as a society, we wish to preserve the demographic and the social mix of these areas, all three levels of government, the private sector and the third sector (non-profit) must participate. Public funding must be employed, and ways of obtaining private funding must be found. As we have seen, third sector or community-based non-profit organizations are key players responsible for planning, designing and operating housing. These groups require appropriate levels of support from government and the private sector to enable them to function effectively.

The federal and provincial governments have the best tax base from which to draw resources to assist the homeless. In order to stem the tide of homelessness in the country, the federal government should augment cost-shared provincial funding programs producing affordable housing. The province has the ability to recognize needs on a regional level and to gauge the ability of social service providers to coordinate with housing support needs. These two levels of government must have the will and the commitment to act for a segment of the Canadian population who have no voice and who are largely ignored in other programs and policies.

Municipal government must also take an active leadership role in the development and the provision of affordable rental housing. As the case studies show, the City of Vancouver contributed by writing down the cost of leased, city-owned land for most of these housing projects. Although municipalities have traditionally limited their housing role to certain regulatory actions, evidence suggests that they are beginning to broaden their range of activities. A recent study found numerous examples of Canadian municipalities implementing innovative initiatives in support of low cost housing (Hulchanski et al., 1990) and other experts are calling for an enhanced municipal role (Carter and McAfee, 1990).

The private sector and private individuals have a role to play in the production of new low cost housing as well. According to a recent Canadian review of the policy issues surrounding homelessness,

> *The message is that the private sector can and should be involved in responding to homelessness, not simply as a critic of the inefficiencies and regulation of government, but as a partner, acknowledging the problems and contributing to the design and execution of solutions...It may be a surprise to many Canadians that the American private sector is much more directly involved with homelessness than is the Canadian. Perhaps the American homelessness problem is more severe and federal restraint is more significant. For whatever reason, the American experience shows the possibility of direct and creative private sector involvement with this issue (Fallis and Murray, 1990, p.267).*

In addition to calling for an expanded role for private sector business interests, private individuals are involved as well. Frequently, neighbourhood residents' vociferous opposition to new, often denser, affordable housing developments and housing for special needs groups acts to prevent the development of new low cost housing. In fact, the "Not in My Backyard Syndrome" (NIMBY) was the most significant problem identified at International Year of Shelter for the Homeless workshops held in Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Housing, 1988). Concerned organizations have begun to call for,

> *a broadly based and planned education program ... to increase the public's awareness and knowledge of alternate types, tenures and forms of housing and their relationship to the community's housing needs* (National Tripartite Group, 1989, p.66).

However, efforts must go beyond public education. All levels of government must demonstrate the political will to take action, whether research, public education, or implementation of appropriate policies, programs, guidelines, regulations and by-laws, in dealing with the problem of NIMBY in an effective, appropriate way.

Many opportunities exist at the community level for meeting the varied needs of the homeless, but strong support from the three levels of government is critical. Community groups know the needs of the community and its residents and have a continuing commitment to it. They can be "good implementers" with proper guidance, support, encouragement and funding.

> *Up to now, funding and public support for neighbourhood or community development groups has been slight;... As the role of broad-based neighbourhood focused organizations, which treat housing as an integral part of a package of necessary social services, becomes recognized as a responsive solution, this funding approach will have to change* (Wolfe and Jay, 1990, p.216).

This research has focused on the critical, effective role that three community-based organizations in Vancouver are playing in supplying housing for homeless persons or those at risk of becoming homeless. The findings suggest that the groups' local knowledge, commitment to their neighbourhood and clients, and ability to furnish a range of services in addition to the housing makes them uniquely suited to such a task. The research was not designed to compare the relative merits of different types of housing sponsors for homeless persons in the central city. In Vancouver, these various types may be loosely categorized as community-based, multi-service organizations like DERA, First United Church and St. James' Social Services Society, as public housing agencies such as the City of Vancouver, Non-Revenue Housing Division and the British Columbia Housing Management Corporation, and as non-community based, non-profit housing developers like Affordable Housing Advisory Association. Future research could compare the nature and quality of housing services provided by these three types of organizations in order to facilitate more effective allocation of resources. Given the special needs of the homeless population, community-based groups are likely to be the best suited for the task of creating and maintaining accommodation and services in inner city areas with large hard-to-house population.

3. **The need for support services linked with housing for special needs groups (including the homeless) must be recognized and reflected in government policies and funding programs.**

For homeless persons, especially the hard-to-house, provision of adequate, affordable, accessible physical shelter is not enough. The case studies demonstrate that differing degrees of support services are needed even for fairly independent households living in the Downtown Eastside. The deinstitutionalized, the disabled and the elderly require assistance, support services and medical care on a daily or an emergency basis. These findings are consistent with research investigating the housing needs of many special needs groups including elderly, native, disabled, and deinstitutionalized people (Weiler, McLaughlin and Fagfhoury, 1988).

Present federal and provincial housing programs do not have the aim of funding supported housing. Their rationale is that housing departments are in the housing business only. Consequently, sponsors of supported housing projects rely on a mix of short-term funding programs and grants from various levels of government to provide some services and depend on community services for the rest. This system does not always operate effectively.

A debate in the literature focuses on the delivery of support services in relation to housing. Should services be available within the housing project as a condition of housing itself, or should they be independent of the project? In its report entitled *More Than Just a Roof: Actions to End Homelessness* (1988), the Minister's Advisory Committee on International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in Ontario recommends an approach called "supportive community living." This concept promotes four principles: independence; integration; stability; and consumer empowerment. To achieve these four principles, supportive community living requires a de-linked approach whereby housing is arranged independently of support services. Losing one cannot jeopardize the other. The case studies describe multi-service agencies employing this model both in providing the services residents need and in performing the linking services to match tenants with other available services.

At the present time, two barriers prevent effective, coordinated provision of support services: a gap in funding for coordinator services; and a lack of support for the coordination social service departments and agencies and housing providers. The case studies suggest that a full-time or 24-hour coordinator is required as a minimum for independent and supportive housing situations. Federal or provincial housing programs rarely give housing projects an adequate administration budget to supply the needed full-time coordinator. Funding for planning, development and operation of projects in inner city locations must be supplemented by on-going funding of a full-time support position in independent and supportive type housing. Programs already exist to provide operating funding for residential facilities in which medical and social services support are necessary, but gaps exist in serving some groups who fall between the cracks.

The other issue, the coordination of support services among a multitude of providers, stems from the variety of jurisdictions responsible for financing and delivering community health and social services. The special role of community-based groups such as DERA, First United Church Housing Society and St. James' Social Services Society in coordinating support services for their clients, should be recognized and supported through provision of adequate resources for staff salaries and associated administrative expenses.

Appendix

A. Interview Guide

B. List of Persons Consulted

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Goals/Objectives of Project

What was the impetus for project?
What type of accommodation (temporary, short-term, permanent) is provided?
Who are the target group(s) of homeless the project serves?
What are your objectives in developing this housing (tenant participation/control, adequacy, affordability, secure environment etc.)

Project Description

Where is it located?
When did the project open
How many units are there and of what type (1 bed, bachelor, housekeeping etc.)
Who are the occupants by age, sex, length of stay, ethnicity, and marital status?
What is the tenant selection process?
How many units are vacant on average? For how long?
Was unit take-up slow or fast? Any difficulties?
What facilities and amenities are available?
What is usage? Are there any problems?
What type of services are available?
What type of project (co-op, non-profit, other)
Are there any innovative features about this project?

Planning and Design

When did planning begin? Duration?
Who was involved in planning? Residents? How?
What difficulties/hurdles encountered in planning and in design?

Are plans available (site plan, floor plans)?
Who were architects or other consultants?
What are unique design features?

Financing Arrangements
What are total capital cost?
What funding program is used?
Is there municipal involvement?
Is there private sector involvement?
What are rental rates?
How many and what proportion of units are subsidized?

Management and Operation

What are annual operating costs?
What are funding source(s)?
Who manages the project?
How many staff are employed?
What are house policies (rents and rent increases; admission criteria; pets)
Who develops policies?
What are management issues or concerns?

Appendix B

List of Persons Consulted

Bantleman, Lawrence. Housing Portfolio Supervisor, Downtown Eastside Residents' Association. (Formerly with First United Church Housing Society) August 3, 1989.

Carter, Jane. Coordinator, Four Sisters Housing Co-operative. November 8, 1989 and June 21, 1990.

Elliott, Jim. President, First United Church Housing Society. August 14 and August 29, 1989.

Ervin, Linda. Past President, First United Church Housing Society. October 25, 1989.

George, Patsy. Social Worker. May 8, 1989.

Gilbert, Frank. Coordinator, Tellier Towers, Downtown Eastsidy Residents' Association. August 3, 1989 and June 22, 1990.

Green, Jim. Organizer, Downtown Eastside Residents' Association. July 31, August 16 and September 21, 1989.

De Grey, Edward. Architect, Edward De Grey Architects. September 13, 1989.

Hall, Robin. Architect, Davidson Yuen and Partners. June 21, 1990.

Kloppenberg, Anne. Social Planner, City of Vancouver. October 18, 1989.

Learey, Stephen. Assistant Organizer, Downtown Eastside Residents' Association. July 31, 1989.

Maron, George. Board Member, First united Church. September 18, 1989.

Marshall, Georgina. Community Worker, First United Church. August 14, 1989 and July 9, 1989.

O'Dea, Jim. Consultant, Terra Housing Consultants. October 30, 1989.

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